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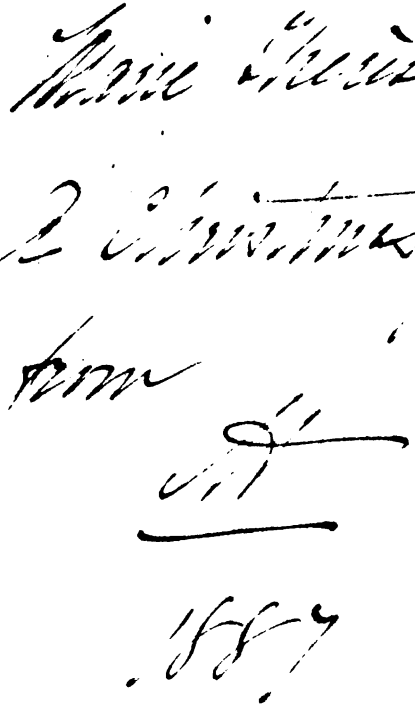

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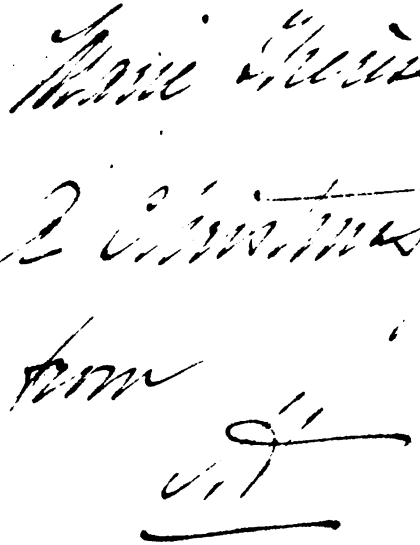

MEMORIALS OF COLEORTON

MEMORIALS OF COLEORTON

BEING LETTERS FROM COLERIDGE WORDSWORTH AND HIS SISTER SOUTHEY AND SIR WALTER SCOTT

TO SIR GEORGE AND LADY BEAUMONT

OF COLEORTON, LEICESTERSHIRE

1803 TO 1834

Edited, with Introduction and Notes,

BY WILLIAM KNIGHT

UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREWS

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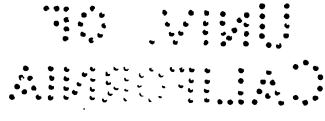

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UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

COLEORTON LETTERS.

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH to LADY BEAUMONT.

COLEORTON, *Sunday Evening.*[1]

My dear Friend,—What reason have we not to bless the poets, our friends and companions in solitude or sorrow, who elevate our thoughts beyond our weak poor selves, and him chiefly who was your sister's consolation, that holy bard, and greatest of men! I often think of the happy evening when, by your fireside, my brother read to us the first book of the Paradise Lost, and not without many hopes that we may again have the same pleasure together. We received the books a week ago, all but Park's *Travels*, which, the bookseller informs us, are out of print, adding that a new edition would be out in a fortnight. We have all already to thank you for a great deal of delight which we have received from

them. In the first place, my brother and sister have read the *Life of Colonel Hutchinson*, which is a most valuable and interesting book. My brother speaks of it with unqualified approbation, and he intends to read it over again. I wait for the time when the reading this work is to fall to my share, with great patience. I shall next begin with Barrow's *Travels*, and I have not quite finished the Anecdotes of Frederick, which I find exceedingly amusing, and instructive also, as giving a lively portrait of the hard-heartedness, and selfishness, and servility of the courtiers of a tyrant, and of the unsatisfactoriness of such a life.

For more than a week we have had the most delightful weather. If William had but waited a few days, it would have been no anticipation when he said to you the 'songs of spring were in the grove,' for all this week the birds have chanted from morn till evening,—larks, blackbirds, thrushes, and far more than I can name; and the busy rooks have joined their happy voices.

As soon as dinner was over to-day, Coleridge, Miss H., my brother, and I set forward upon a ramble through Spring Wood; then we came

to a cottage at the edge of another wood, which, I believe, does not belong to Sir George (I have forgotten the name of the wood), but I dare say you will recollect the spot. The cottage stands so sweetly in a sloping green field, which is enclosed and sheltered by the woods in a semi-circle. We went still further, and saw many traces of the coming spring, two or three primroses amongst the honeysuckles, but what was most pleasant of all to us, the paths were in most places perfectly dry, and we hope that we shall henceforth be able frequently to wander in the woods. I must not forget to tell you that we have discovered a favourite cottage of yours within this fortnight, and visited it several times—the little dwelling under two holly-trees, about a hundred yards from the wayside, going to Mr. Bailey's. The situation of the cottage is beautiful; the peep of the lake (lake I will call it here, for it looks exactly like one) is very sweet, and the village, when you turn your eyes to the other side, has a very cheerful appearance. It gave us great satisfaction, when we were sitting with the old man and his wife by their fireside, to hear them let out the history of their love for the holly-trees. He told us how long ago he

had planted them ('when he was a *young youth* going to service'), and that they were now a shelter for his house, and nothing could prevail upon him to part with them. You can hardly conceive with what pride he directed our attention to the richness of the berries, and at the same time lamented that some idle boys had 'robbed' one tree of its prettiest branches, which arched over, and almost touched the cottage window; he would not have had it 'cut away for half a guinea.'

We longed not for *those* trees, but for half a score as beautiful in the winter garden. Such a sight neither you nor we can hope to see there; but a very few years will, I doubt not, make it a delicious winter retreat. When the shrubs and trees once get forward they will begin to look pretty, and the situation and the form of the ground is such that it is already sheltered and warm without the help of trees. The men work industriously, I am sure, for we never find them idle; but little seems yet to be done, the labour having been all employed in clearing away, removing rubbish, and digging soil out for the border. My brother thinks that, by all means, the terrace should be terminated by another tower. He is

very happy in his employment, and I assure you that you need not give yourself a moment's care about interrupting him in his poetical labours; for those will and must go on when he begins, and any interruption, such as attending to the progress of the workmen, and planning the garden, is of the greatest use to him. After a certain time the progress is by no means proportioned to the labour in composition, and if he is called from it by other thoughts, he returns to it with ten times the pleasure, and his work goes on proportionally more rapidly. He and Mr. Craig intend to visit the nursery at Nottingham next week, or the week following. It was a most kind and friendly deed when Sir George wrote to Coleridge. He had begun to write several days before he received Sir George's letter; but I do not know how long it might have been before he would have been able to finish the letter. At some future time my brother hopes to have it in his power to profit from Sir George's kindness; he is very proud of such mutual records of their friendship; and I need not say what a grace and a value one of Sir George's beautiful sketches would add to any volume of poems; nor (what would be of more

importance in Sir George's feelings) the great delight that we all in common by our own fireside should receive from it. Adieu, my dear Lady Beaumont.—Believe me, with sincerest gratitude, your affectionate friend,

D. WORDSWORTH.

[1] The postmark is Feb. 17, 1807.—ED.

WORDSWORTH to LADY BEAUMONT.

Coleorton, May 21, 1807.

My dear Lady Beaumont,—Though I am to see you so soon, I cannot but write a word or two, to thank you for the interest you take in my poems, as evinced by your solicitude about their immediate reception. I write partly to thank you for this and to express the pleasure it has given me, and partly to remove any uneasiness from your mind which the disappointments you sometimes meet with in this labour of love may occasion. I see that you have many battles to fight for me,—more than, in the ardour and confidence of your pure and elevated mind, you had ever thought of being summoned to; but be assured that this opposition is nothing more than what I distinctly foresaw that you and my other friends would have to encounter. I say this, not to give myself credit for an eye of prophecy, but to allay any vexatious thoughts on my account which this opposition may have produced in you.

It is impossible that any expectations can be lower than mine concerning the immediate effect of this little work upon what is called the public. I do not here take into consideration the envy and malevolence, and all the bad passions which always stand in the way of a work of any merit from a living poet; but merely think of the pure absolute honest ignorance, in which all worldlings of every rank and situation must be enveloped, with respect to the thoughts, feelings, and images, on which the life of my poems depends. The things which I have taken, whether from within or without,—what have they to do with routs, dinners, morning calls, hurry from door to door, from street to street, on foot or in carriage; with Mr. Pitt or Mr. Fox, Mr. Paul or Sir Francis Burdett, the Westminster election or the borough of Honiton? In a word—for I cannot stop to make my way through the hurry of images that present themselves to me,—what have they to do with endless talking about things nobody cares anything for except as far as their own vanity is concerned, and this with persons they care nothing for but as their vanity or *selfishness* is concerned?—what have they to do (to say all at once) with a life without love? In such a life

there can be no thought; for we have no thought (save thoughts of pain) but as far as we have love and admiration.

It is an awful truth, that there neither is, nor can be, any genuine enjoyment of poetry among nineteen out of twenty of those persons who live, or wish to live, in the broad light of the world—among those who either are, or are striving to make themselves, people of consideration in society. This is a truth, and an awful one, because to be incapable of a feeling of poetry, in my sense of the word, is to be without love of human nature and reverence for God.

Upon this I shall insist elsewhere; at present let me confine myself to my object, which is to make you, my dear friend, as easy-hearted as myself with respect to these poems. Trouble not yourself upon their present reception; of what moment is that compared with what I trust is their destiny?—to console the afflicted; to add sunshine to daylight, by making the happy happier; to teach the young and the gracious of every age to see, to think, and feel, and, therefore, to become more actively and securely virtuous; this is their office, which I trust they will faithfully perform, long after we (that is, all

that is mortal of us) are mouldered in our graves. I am well aware how far it would seem to many I overrate my own exertions, when I speak in this way, in direct connection with the volume I have just made public.

I am not, however, afraid of such censure, insignificant as probably the majority of those poems would appear to very respectable persons. I do not mean London wits and witlings, for these have too many foul passions about them to be respectable, even if they had more intellect than the benign laws of Providence will allow to such a heartless existence as theirs is; but grave, kindly-natured, worthy persons, who would be pleased if they could. I hope that these volumes are not without some recommendations, even for readers of this class: but their imagination has slept; and the voice which is the voice of my poetry, without imagination, cannot be heard. Leaving these, I was going to say a word to such readers as Mr. ——. Such!—how would he be offended if he knew I considered him only as a representative of a class, and not an unique! 'Pity,' says Mr. —— 'that so many trifling things should be admitted to obstruct the view of those that have merit.' Now, let this candid judge

take, by way of example, the sonnets, which, probably, with the exception of two or three other poems, for which I will not contend, appear to him the most trifling, as they are the shortest. I would say to him, omitting things of higher consideration, there is one thing which must strike you at once, if you will only read these poems,—that those *To Liberty*, at least, have a connection with, or a bearing upon, each other; and, therefore, if individually they want weight, perhaps, as a body, they may not be so deficient. At least, this ought to induce you to suspend your judgment, and qualify it so far as to allow that the writer aims at least at comprehensiveness.

But, dropping this, I would boldly say at once, that these sonnets, while they each fix the attention upon some important sentiment, separately considered, do, at the same time, collectively make a poem on the subject of civil liberty and national independence, which, either for simplicity of style or grandeur of moral sentiment, is, alas! likely to have few parallels in the poetry of the present day. Again, turn to the *Moods of my own Mind*. There is scarcely a poem here of above thirty lines, and very

trifling these poems will appear to many; but, omitting to speak of them individually, do they not, taken collectively, fix the attention upon a subject eminently poetical, viz., the interest which objects in Nature derive from the predominance of certain affections, more or less permanent, more or less capable of salutary renewal in the mind of the being contemplating these objects? This is poetic, and essentially poetic. And why? Because it is creative.

But I am wasting words, for it is nothing more than you know; and if said to those for whom it is intended, it would not be understood.

I see by your last letter that Mrs. Fermor has entered into the spirit of these Moods of my own Mind. Your transcript from her letter gave me the greatest pleasure; but I must say that even she has something yet to receive from me. I say this with confidence, from her thinking that I have fallen below myself in the sonnet, beginning—

> With ships the sea was sprinkled far and nigh.

As to the other which she objects to, I will only observe that there is a misprint in the last line but two—

And *though* this wilderness,

for

And *through* this wilderness,

that makes it unintelligible. This latter sonnet, for many reasons (though I do not abandon it), I will not now speak of; but upon the other, I could say something important in conversation, and will attempt now to illustrate it by a comment, which, I feel, will be inadequate to convey my meaning. There is scarcely one of my poems which does not aim to direct the attention to some moral sentiment, or to some general principle, or law of thought, or of our intellectual constitution. For instance, in the present case, who is there that has not felt that the mind can have no rest among a multitude of objects, of which it either cannot make one whole, or from which it cannot single out one individual, whereupon may be concentrated the attention, divided among or distracted by a multitude? After a certain time, we must either select one image or object, which must put out of view the rest wholly, or must subordinate them to itself while it stands forth as a head:

How glowed the firmament
With living sapphires! Hesperus that *led*

> The starry host, rode brightest; till the moon,
> Rising in clouded majesty, at length,
> Apparent *Queen*, unveiled *her peerless* light,
> And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw.

Having laid this down as a general principle, take the case before us. I am represented in the sonnet as casting my eyes over the sea, sprinkled with a multitude of ships, like the heavens with stars. My mind may be supposed to float up and down among them, in a kind of dreamy indifference with respect either to this or that one, only in a pleasurable state of feeling with respect to the whole prospect. 'Joyously it showed.' This continued till that feeling may be supposed to have passed away, and a kind of comparative listlessness or apathy to have succeeded, as at this line,

> Some veering up and down, one knew not why.

All at once, while I am in this state, comes forth an object, an individual; and my mind, sleepy and unfixed, is awakened and fastened in a moment.

> Hesperus, that *led*
> The starry host,

is a poetical object, because the glory of his own nature gives him the pre-eminence the moment

he appears. He calls forth the poetic faculty, receiving its exertions as a tribute. But this ship in the sonnet may, in a manner still more appropriate, be said to come upon a mission of the poetic spirit, because, in its own appearance and attributes, it is barely sufficiently distinguished to rouse the creative faculty of the human mind to exertions at all times welcome, but doubly so when they come upon us when in a state of remissness. The mind being once fixed and roused, all the rest comes from itself; it is merely a lordly ship, nothing more:

> This ship was nought to me, nor I to her,
> Yet I pursued her with a lover's look.

My mind wantons with grateful joy in the exercise of its own powers, and, loving its own creation,

> This ship to all the rest I did prefer,

making her a sovereign or a regent, and thus giving body and life to all the rest; mingling up this idea with fondness and praise—

> where she comes the winds must stir;

and concluding the whole with

> On went she, and due north her journey took;

thus taking up again the reader with whom I

began, letting him know how long I must have watched this favourite vessel, and inviting him to rest his mind as mine is resting.

Having said so much upon mere fourteen lines, which Mrs. Fermor did not approve, I cannot but add a word or two upon my satisfaction in finding that my mind has so much in common with hers, and that we participate so many of each other's pleasures. I collect this from her having singled out the two little poems, *The Daffodils*, and *The Rock crowned with Snowdrops*. I am sure that whoever is much pleased with either of these quiet and tender delineations must be fitted to walk through the recesses of my poetry with delight, and will there recognise, at every turn, something or other in which, and over which, it has that property and right which knowledge and love confer. The line,

Come, blessed barrier, etc.,

in the Sonnet upon *Sleep*, which Mrs. F. points out, had before been mentioned to me by Coleridge, and, indeed, by almost everybody who had heard it, as eminently beautiful. My letter (as this second sheet, which I am obliged to take, admonishes me) is growing to an enormous

length; and yet, saving that I have expressed my calm confidence that these poems will live, I have said nothing which has a particular application to the object of it, which was to remove all disquiet from your mind on account of the condemnation they may at present incur from that portion of my contemporaries who are called the public. I am sure, my dear Lady Beaumont, if you attach any importance to it, it can only be from an apprehension that it may affect me, upon which I have already set you at ease; or from a fear that this present blame is ominous of their future or final destiny. If this be the case, your tenderness for me betrays you. Be assured that the decision of these persons has nothing to do with the question; they are altogether incompetent judges. These people, in the senseless hurry of their idle lives, do not *read* books, they merely snatch a glance at them, that they may talk about them. And even if this were not so, never forget what, I believe, was observed to you by Coleridge, that every great and original writer, in proportion as he is great or original, must himself create the taste by which he is to be relished; he must teach the art by which he is to be seen; this, in a certain degree, even to

all persons, however wise and pure may be their lives, and however unvitiated their taste. But for those who dip into books in order to give an opinion of them, or talk about them to take up an opinion—for this multitude of unhappy, and misguided, and misguiding beings, an entire regeneration must be produced; and if this be possible, it must be a work *of time*. To conclude, my ears are stone-dead to this idle buzz, and my flesh as insensible as iron to these petty stings; and, after what I have said, I am sure yours will be the same. I doubt not that you will share with me an invincible confidence that my writings (and among them these little poems) will co-operate with the benign tendencies in human nature and society, wherever found; and that they will, in their degree, be efficacious in making men wiser, better, and happier. Farewell. I will not apologise for this letter, though its length demands an apology.—Believe me, eagerly wishing for the happy day when I shall see you and Sir George here, most affectionately yours, W. WORDSWORTH.

Do not hurry your coming hither on our account: my sister regrets that she did not

press this upon you, as you say in your letter, 'we cannot *possibly* come before the first week in June'; from which we infer that your kindness will induce you to make sacrifices for our sakes. Whatever pleasure we may have in thinking of Grasmere, we have no impatience to be gone, and think with full as much regret at leaving Coleorton. I had, for myself, indeed, a wish to be at Grasmere with as much of the summer before me as might be; but to this I attach no importance whatever, as far as the gratification of that wish interferes with any inclination or duty of yours. I could not be satisfied without seeing you here, and shall have great pleasure in waiting.

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH to LADY BEAUMONT.

Grasmere, December 6th.[1]

My dear Friend,—I hope you are arrived in safety at Dunmow, and have found Lady Beaumont[2] not in worse health and spirits than when you left her, though it can scarcely be expected but that after every summer's absence you must perceive some shade of difference in her, some little decay of strength. This excessive cold weather must be very trying to old persons, though they never should stir out of doors. How does she bear it? You do not mention Sir George's health, so I hope he is well. Coleridge's lectures, as he told us (for we have had another letter from him), were to begin last Monday, and I had hopes that you would be present at the first; but I gather from your letter that you were to leave town before that time, which I am very sorry for. Mr. de Quincey, the gentleman whom I mentioned to you, who had come with Mrs. Coleridge from Bristol to

see my brother, has promised to take down the heads of the whole course of lectures (and he is very capable of doing it accurately), of which he will send a copy to us. He is a remarkable and very interesting young man; very diminutive in person, which, to strangers, makes him appear insignificant; and so modest, and so very shy, that even now I wonder how he had ever the courage to address himself to my brother by letter. I think of this young man with extraordinary pleasure, as he is a remarkable instance of the power of my brother's poems, over a lovely and contemplative mind, unwarped by any established laws of taste (as far as it is in my power to judge from his letters, and the little I have seen of him)—a pure and innocent mind! It will be a week to-morrow since William left me, which was as soon as the roads would permit. I have not yet heard of his arrival at Stockton; but I will give you the account of his journey to Penrith in his own brief words, which perhaps may amuse you. He left home between ten and eleven o'clock on Tuesday morning, and he says, 'I arrived here (at Penrith) between five and six. It was a pleasant morning; Skiddaw from the top of the Raise

(Dunmail Raise) one huge mass of snow, spotless and smooth even to sublimity.' (By the by, I must tell you that we, in the Vale of Grasmere, have no opportunity of observing this appearance, all our mountains being rocky, and therefore spotted with black.) He goes on: 'The road was tolerably good all down St. John's. Within half a mile of Threlkeld, I overtook a man of the country on horseback on a pad, told him whither I was going, and that I wished to hire a horse. He said he himself was busy, but if I could get a lad at Threlkeld to bring back the horse, he had no objection to let me have his a little way. Procured a lad at Threlkeld, had a quart of ale with the man, and set off with the lad on the horse behind me. Rode on to Hutton Moor, had four miles' riding on the whole, and then parted with the lad; gave the man for his horse a shilling, the boy sixpence. At Penruddock saw a man before me in a gig, and, with smart running, overtook him. He asked me to get in and ride, but had not rode above 100 yards before we met a man, who told us that the gig could not get along. The gentleman turned back to Penruddock, and I walked on. It rained very hard. Lost one

of my gloves on the road, turned back, and, poring in the dark, found it. Got here very little tired. The journey has been a very interesting one: the long avenues of snow, which have been cut through some places half a mile long, and often between two and three yards deep, had a very solemn and lovely appearance. I passed several parties of men cutting; in one place at least twenty-five. Saw a shepherd in the wildest part of Hutton Moor collecting his sheep, on horseback, not on the road, but on the wildest part of the moor. The wind was at my back all the way, and helped me on; and I am surprised to find myself so little fatigued, for the road was often very slippery and trying.' I hope you will not be tired with this extract, which, though it seemed to me short before I began, has, I find, filled half my paper. At least you will be pleased to find that my dear brother was in such good health and spirits. Since his departure we have had a fine thaw, but the frost has begun again keener than ever; everything freezes in the house, which was not the case before, and there is again a thin covering of snow upon the fields. The mountains, of course, have never been clear, and

long will it be before the huge snow-drifts are melted away. If we had had any reason to expect such weather as this, my sister had not gone to Stockton this year, but when she left home, the weather was very pleasant, and such a storm at this season of the year is not remembered by any person living in this country; and it is, indeed, forty years since there has been such a fall of snow at any season. Forty years ago the roads were blocked up for three weeks, and it is still remembered by numbers, and goes by the name of the '*great snow.*'

My sister was prevailed upon to leave home by the earnest entreaties of her friends, especially of her sister Joanna, who was going thither, and they travelled from Penrith together; but (as I have said) nothing could have prevailed upon us to trust her, if we could have foreseen what has happened. I hope, however, she has not suffered in any respect from the storm, except that her return will have been delayed by it, for William must stay a fortnight with her amongst her friends. She writes in good spirits, and her sister tells us her looks are much improved. I have to thank you for a hamper of game, which arrived on Friday. When I saw

the hamper, I began directly to grieve that William and Mary were not at home to share it with me; but I soon recollected that I might make a present of a part to a neighbour who had been very civil to us, and to whom we had had no opportunity of making any return. Accordingly I did so, and the gift was much prized. There was a mistake both in the address, and the manner of sending it. It had been sent by *Leicester*, and was directed to Keswick, instead of Kendal; also it is proper to say, when the package requires expedition, *To be forwarded by the Ambleside Post.* Luckily, the weather being so severe, the game was quite sweet, but it had been ten days on the road. I am sorry to trouble you with this explanation of mistakes; but I think it proper, as the like might occur again, and by mentioning it to Captain Bailey, when you have occasion to write to him, it might be prevented. I had heard from Coleridge of Davy's illness, and his great discoveries. I am very anxious to hear that he is restored to health. Poor Wilkie! I am very sorry, too, to hear of his illness. I fear that by too much application, though in very different ways, they may have both irreparably injured

their constitutions. Pray make my most respectful and affectionate remembrances to Sir George. Adieu, my dear friend.—Ever yours,

D. W.

[1] The postmark is Dec. 14, 1807.—ED.
[2] The Dowager Lady Beaumont.—ED.

SOUTHEY to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Keswick, Dec. 11, 1807.

My dear Sir,—In February I hope to be in town, and to hunt out the Crown of Thorns. The best existing collection of English poetry is probably that of Mr. Hill, a merchant at Queen Hithe. If it be not there, I will inquire of Mr. Heber, and in the last place examine the Bridgewater Library, by means of Mr. Todd, the Editor of Milton. I have no doubt of succeeding in this search.

The projected edition of D. Quixote has terminated in the worst of all ways. Cadell and Davies authorised Longman to apply to me concerning it, and meantime, without his knowledge, concluded a bargain with a Mr. Balfour, a gentleman who translated Yriarte's Fables about three years ago, and by that translation proved himself more thoroughly devoid of all taste than it is possible for any person to conceive who has not seen his miserable mutilations of those excellent originals. Longman, more

hurt at this than I am, in consequence refused to be concerned in the publication, and wished me still to proceed. But I dislike such kind of opposition, and am in no want of worthier occupations. Smirke will be no loser by this, for his designs will sell any book, be it ever so bad.

Wordsworth has been handled as I expected by Jeffrey in the *Edinburgh Review*. He has to regret that his friends are not as active as his enemies. I am not without hope that Coleridge may be provoked upon this occasion, and have written to him upon the subject.

Mrs. S. and her sisters join me in respect to Lady Beaumont. We are all as you left us, except that my study is in better order, and all its contents in seemly array. Mr. Wilson had never before seen a pheasant, and was, as you may well imagine, delighted at the splendour of its plumage.—Yours very respectfully,

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

WORDSWORTH to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

[1807.[1]]

My dear Sir George,—I am quite delighted to hear of your picture for Peter Bell; I was much pleased with the sketch, and I have no doubt that the picture will surpass it as far as a picture ought to do. I long much to see it. I should approve of any engraver approved by you. But remember that no poem of mine will ever be popular; and I am afraid that the sale of 'Peter' would not carry the expense of the engraving, and that the poem, in the estimation of the public, would be a weight upon the print. I say not this in modest disparagement of the poem, but in sorrow for the sickly taste of the public in verse. The *people* would love the poem of Peter Bell, but the *public* (a very different being) will never love it. Thanks for dear Lady B.'s transcript from your friend's letter; it is written with candour, but I must say a word or two not in praise of it. 'Instances of what I mean,' says your friend, 'are to be found in a poem on a

Daisy' (by the by, it is on *the* Daisy, a mighty difference!) 'and on *Daffodils reflected in the Water.*' Is this accurately transcribed by Lady Beaumont? If it be, what shall we think of criticism or judgment founded upon, and exemplified by, a poem which must have been so inattentively perused? My language is precise; and, therefore, it would be false modesty to charge myself with blame.

> Beneath the trees,
> Ten thousand dancing in the *breeze.*
> The *waves beside* them danced, but they
> Outdid the *sparkling waves* in glee.

Can expression be more distinct? And let me ask your friend how it is possible for flowers to be *reflected* in water where there are *waves*? They may, indeed, in *still* water; but the very object of my poem is the trouble or agitation, both of the flowers and the water. I must needs respect the understanding of every one honoured by your friendship; but sincerity compels me to say that my poems must be more nearly looked at, before they can give rise to any remarks of much value, even from the strongest minds. With respect to this individual poem, Lady B. will recollect how Mrs. Fermor expressed herself upon it. A letter also was sent to me, addressed

to a friend of mine, and by him communicated to me, in which this identical poem was singled out for fervent approbation. What then shall we say? Why, let the poet first consult his own heart, as I have done, and leave the rest to posterity,—to, I hope, an improving posterity. The fact is, the English *public* are at this moment in the same state of mind with respect to my poems, if small things may be compared with great, as the French are in respect to Shakespeare, and not the French alone, but almost the whole Continent. In short, in your friend's letter, I am condemned for the very thing for which I ought to have been praised, viz., that I have not written down to the level of superficial observers and unthinking minds. Every great poet is a teacher: I wish either to be considered as a teacher, or as nothing.

To turn to a more pleasing subject. Have you painted anything else beside this picture from Peter Bell? Your two oil-paintings (and, indeed, everything I have of yours) have been much admired by the artists who have seen them. And, for our own parts, we like them better every day; this, in particular, is the case with the small picture from the neighbourhood

of Coleorton, which, indeed, pleased me much at the first sight, but less impressed the rest of our household, who now see as many beauties in it as I do myself. Havill, the water-colour painter, was much pleased with these things; he is painting at Ambleside, and has done a view of Rydal Water, looking down upon it from Rydal Park, of which I should like to know your opinion; it will be exhibited in the Spring, in the Water-Colour Exhibition. I have purchased a black-lead pencil sketch of Mr. Green, of Ambleside, which, I think, has great merit, the materials being uncommonly picturesque, and well put together: I should dearly like to have the same subject (it is the cottage at Glencoign, by Ulleswater) treated by you. In the poem I have just written, you will find one situation which, if the work should ever become familiarly known, would furnish as fine a subject for a picture as anything I remember in poetry, ancient or modern. I need not mention what it is, as when you read the poem you cannot miss it. We have at last had, by the same post, two letters from Coleridge, long and melancholy; and also, from Keswick, an account so depressing as to the state of his health, that I should

have set off immediately to London, to see him, if I had not myself been confined by indisposition.

I hope that Davy is by this time perfectly restored to health.—Believe me, my dear Sir George, most sincerely yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

1 No date is given to this letter; but from its reference to a subject for a picture to be found in a poem just written, from the fact that *The White Doe of Rylstone* contained such a subject, and that Sir George Beaumont did illustrate that poem, the date may be approximately fixed as about Christmas 1807. Wordsworth left Grasmere for Stockton-on-Tees on December 1, 1807. At Stockton he composed the first half of *The White Doe*; and returned to Grasmere on the Wednesday before Christmas 1807.—ED.

Dorothy Wordsworth to Lady Beaumont.

My dear Friend,—Many thanks for your kind letter. We received it on a morning as delightful to the feelings as any I can remember. My brother and I walked to Ambleside to meet the post; the birds were singing joyfully, and the sun shone so warm, and the air was so mild that with closed eyes we might have believed it was the month of May; but the ground was almost covered with snow, and to-day we have had cold

dismal rain, and we may expect more snow. It has been a long and most severe winter, particularly unfortunate for us, as it has added to the inconveniences of our two small houses, and has also often compelled my brother to the sitting-room, when in a milder season he would have composed his verses in the open air; indeed, I cannot but admire the fortitude, and wonder at the success, with which he has laboured, in that one room, common to all the family, to all visitors, and where the children frequently play beside him. I spoke rashly when I said that I hoped you might receive the printed poem at Dunmow. Much time will be lost in sending it backwards and forwards, and Southey did not go to Leeds till last Tuesday. It gave us great delight to hear that Sir George has painted the picture from *Peter Bell.* I should think, independent of its own connection with the poem, that the *painting* must gain very much by the change of time, from moonlight to early morning; and, as separating that scene entirely from the action contained in the poem, it is very judicious. There would have been some confusion if the *moon*light had been preserved. I hope the day will come when we shall see the picture

itself, whether ever the poem be graced with an engraving from it or not. We have been informed that Davy is perfectly recovered. I hope that this good news is true. Poor Coleridge! I have deferred speaking of him to the last, for I have nothing good to say. We have been exceedingly distressed by the two letters which we have had from him, and still more by an account that came from Keswick; insomuch that my brother was only prevented by his own illness from setting off to London. He wrote to Coleridge requesting an immediate answer, and also wrote to Miss Lamb to desire her to go to him, and see exactly how he is, and inform us; and upon the nature of her answer and Coleridge's, it will depend whether my brother goes to London or not. His object will be to attend upon Coleridge as long as he (Coleridge) is obliged to stay in London, or to see that he is likely to be attended to, and to prevail upon him, as soon as he is at liberty, to come into the north. He had said to Southey that he '*could* not live many months.' Now I do not think he spoke thus, rashly or lightly, still less to give pain; and I believe that, if he were wholly left to himself, it might, in a few months even, be

impossible to save him; but I have no doubt that his low spirits have made him look at his condition of body as so hopeless, and that if he could be cheered, as formerly, by the society of his friends, and would take common care of himself, he might yet be well, and live long, to the benefit of mankind. We anxiously expect his letter, and still more anxiously Miss Lamb's, as her account will be more to be depended upon, because dear Coleridge will be unwilling to draw my brother away from his home. Adieu, my dear Lady Beaumont. Forgive this scrawl; I write with a bad pen, and in *haste*, for it is late, and my letter goes in the morning.—Believe me ever your affectionate friend,

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH.

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH to LADY BEAUMONT.

Grasmere, December 3d,[1] 1808.

My dear Friend,—Three or four times have I been about to write to you, and far oftener have wished to do it since I received your interesting letter from Dunmow, and to-day arrives your note enclosed in the parcel with Walton's *Complete Angler*. I should have felt the bitterness of self-reproach for my long silence, if I had been betrayed into it by a procrastinating disposition, or by negligence; but I wished to write to you in quiet and leisure, and some ordinary every-day occurrence always prevented me. My dear Lady Beaumont, I cannot say how much I am gratified by Sir George's kind remembrance of me, nor how highly I shall value his gift, for *his* sake, as well as that of the pure innocent spirit that breathed out the tender sentiments contained in that book, so many years ago. I have read a few pages here and there, and have seen

enough to be convinced that it has not been overpraised. I was greatly delighted with one passage, where Walton speaks familiarly of Sir Henry Wotton, Milton's friend, and his frequent companion in his favourite pleasure, and he repeats some of the expressions of Sir Henry, which are very beautiful. My brother has seized upon the book for his own reading this night, as he fancies that the imagery and sentiments accord with his own train of thought at present, in connection with his poem, which he is just upon the point of finishing. I think it will be finished in the course of three or four days. He has written above 1200 lines; it is in irregular eight-syllable verse, and will be called *a tale*. I certainly misled you when I said that it would be a sort of romance, for it has nothing of that character; yet it is very different from any other poem that my brother has written. I hope that you will be pleased with it; indeed, I am sure you will, and I can hardly conceive how any feeling heart can be otherwise.[2] My brother has fixed upon the day of his finishing this poem as the day of his writing to Sir George. He would have written a week ago, but, as he said, having waited so

long, he would now wait till the work was done, when he should have the pleasure of telling Sir George what he knew he would be glad to hear. My sister, with my brother, arrived at home on the Wednesday before Christmas Day, she having been absent six weeks, and he three weeks. They had not an unpleasant journey, though the weather was excessively severe; the trees, hedges, and every blade of grass or withered stalk having been covered as thick with hoar-frost, all day through, for many days together (in spite of sunshine and blue sky), as ever I have seen them covered with snow after a heavy snow-shower; and the appearance was exquisitely beautiful. I could not but think that during the whole eight years of our residence, we had never before seen these mountain vales in the full possession of their *peculiar* grandeur and power over the imagination. The lakes were firm ice, as clear as crystal. But I have strayed from the point where I set out. The inconvenience of our small house (for we have been driven out of the kitchen on the opposite side of the road by the late rainy weather) often reminds us of the comforts we enjoyed last year at Coleorton; but we are so

very glad that we are not in the *new* house, that we are disposed to make the best of everything, and to fancy ourselves very comfortable; though I must confess we are never thoroughly so till after seven o'clock in the evening, when the children are put to bed, and the business of the house is over; for the kitchen not being ceiled, we can almost hear every word that is spoken when we are in the sitting-room, and every foot that stirs. Spite of this, my brother has worked most industriously, and, I think, successfully; but of that you will one day judge. When I recollect the happy evening we spent together at the reading of *Peter Bell*, I long for the time when this last poem[2] shall be read to you and Sir George.

We have anxiously expected a letter from Coleridge, with some account of his valuable friend Davy; but we have had no letter from him since I wrote to you. Mr. Stuart, the Editor of the *Courier*, whom my brother saw at Stockton, had however reported that he was pronounced to be out of danger, and this morning we have had a confirmation of the happy tidings (through Southey) from Sir George. I am very much afraid that we may hear of a relapse, and at best, one scarcely ventures to hope that,

after such a shock, his constitution will be unimpaired; yet how Coleridge does rise up, as it were, almost from the dead! It is next to marvellous to hear of his good looks after the two severe fits of illness that he has lately had. I do hope that the work in which he is engaged will be of service to him, especially as his exertions for the cause of human nature (such I may call them) will be animated by his strong sentiments of friendship and veneration for my brother.

As to the *Edinburgh Review*, to which I suppose you allude, it is so very silly, and, as you express it, *ignorant*, that I think it must do good with the judicious, though I fear its influence upon the many who buy books will for a time affect the sale of the Poems. It is a harsh transition to turn from these busy malevolent creatures, to that pious gentle soul, the mother of your friend, who was soothed in pain and sickness and old age by the tender effusions of my brother's heart. I had always a firm conviction that such would be his power over the innocent and pure; yet every single proof of this must needs be most pleasing to me. What a beautiful picture of filial piety does that short extract from Lady Susan Bathurst's letter

present! and how sweetly did her mother's breath pass away! I received your letter when I was alone, and I will not attempt to tell you how much it employed my thoughts, or how grateful I was to you for it. I read the passage to my brother on the evening of his return home, and I hardly need to add that he was much affected by it. Such facts as these we may lay to the heart, and surely they may soothe us in worldly sorrow! We were exceedingly glad to receive such an account of your dear mother. I recollect you gave me a very interesting description of her manner of spending Christmas Day twelve months ago, and on the same day this year I thought of her and you, with many wishes for your happiness and tranquillity in the coming year, and for her, that whenever her end comes it may be bright and cheerful as her life has been, and without severe bodily suffering. Again I must repeat how much I value Sir George's gift. Pray desire him to accept my best thanks. Adieu, my dear friend. May God bless you.—Your affectionate and grateful DOROTHY WORDSWORTH.

Though the Journal would have arrived safely,

it was better not to run the risk of sending it, as our own copy is very incomplete, and it is possible that Coleridge may lose his; and also if it is likely to afford any pleasure to Mrs. Fermor, I should have been sorry that it had come. I wish I had not mentioned the mis-sending of the game, as I caused you the trouble of writing about it; and we have since received a hamper (just at the beginning of Christmas festivities), which was properly directed, and came in a very short time. There is one part of your last letter which I have not noticed. Do not think from this that it made no impression upon me; but I have left no room for such a subject: I mean the over-indulgence of children. No person can be more seriously convinced of the bad effects of over-indulgence than I am, and though I am far from thinking that I entirely avoid the fault, yet I hope I do not very grievously err. More of this hereafter. I should be very glad of an opportunity of reading Mrs. Carter's Life. Perhaps it may be sent to Southey to review, and we may see it through him.

[1] Evidently, from the postmark and the contents of the letter, a mistake for *January*.—ED.

[2] Probably the allusion is to *The White Doe of Rylstone*. —ED.

Coleridge to Sir George Beaumont.

348 *Strand, Thursday night,*
Feb. 18, 1808.

Dear Sir George,—For many weeks, with only two intervals, and these but day-long, I have been ill, very ill, confined mostly to my bed, altogether to my bedroom. In my pain I earnestly wish to die, and in my best hours the only odour of hope that remains at the bottom of my Pandora casket, is a relaxation of that wish—a passiveness of life—the continuance of which to any useful purpose I have as little reason to expect, as, for any pleasurable end, to desire. I have written this most reluctantly; but the instinct, not wholly the kind thoughts of the two or three whom in my heart's heart I revere, still works, and will be obeyed. Proofs of this feeling, though for the greater part fragmentary or not fully published, will be found by those who may examine my manuscripts when I am no more. I have left my bed at this time in consequence of a letter, which has deeply affected me,

and of a name, which would be a spell to recall me for the time: even from the verge of death. Sara Hutchinson's and Mary Wordsworth's brother, after a *romance* almost of strange and perilous adventures and sufferings, has been pressed, and is now in great distress on board of His Majesty's ship *Chichester*, at Sheerness. His name is Henry Hutchinson: an unfortunate man, an enemy to himself only, and, like all those of that character, expiating their faults by sufferings beyond what the severest judge would have inflicted as their due punishment. Men would rather be deemed knaves than fools; and there are reasons for this at the depth of the human heart, worthy of a miner like Wordsworth to bring up into light. Well, this brother, who is an excellent seaman, was captured in the *Betsy*, and taken in to Guadaloupe; there a prisoner for three months; thence exchanged and sent to Antigua; shipped himself as master of a small privateer, and for the first month was successful, having carried in an American ship, with French property, for which he would have received four hundred dollars had he been fortunate enough to return to Antigua. But, taking a Spanish schooner, he was sent by his owners on board

her to convey her a little to windward of Cape Cordera, on the Spanish main, where her owner lives, who had engaged to ransom her. Here he was driven off land, provisionless, without water, even without a compass; was obliged to stand over for the West India Islands, and after passing four days without tasting anything, he and his poor fellows made the west end of Porto Vigue, together with His Majesty's ship *Fortunee* (I cannot distinctly decipher the word), and Henry, having no copy of commission, Captain Vansittart took the vessel from him (of course), and pressed him and his two men. However, Captain V. promised him some preferment, and gave him the charge of navigating the vessel; but meeting with an absolute hurricane in the Gulf of Mexico, he lost both his masts, and four men, and was finally compelled to run in under jury-masts to Vera Cruz, where he and his remaining crew were taken prisoners, and sent three hundred miles up the country to Puebla; there kept eighteen months; thence to Vera Cruz again, where he was imprisoned four months; whence he was at length exchanged, and sent home to join the *Fortune* (?), now at Plymouth.

Dear Sir George, you cannot yourself feel the burthen and indelicacy of employing private

friendship to any interruption of public concerns, or the unpleasantness of addressing a private friend in his public official character, more than I do. Few could be the instances, in which I could have prevailed on myself to urge you to it. But this man's whole life has been one dreamlike tale of sufferings,—of repeated imprisonments, of famine, of wounds; and twice he has had the yellow fever, and escaped each time from among a charnel-house of corses. He has done enough; he has suffered enough; and to me it is as if it were my own child—far more than if it were myself,—for he is the brother of the two beings whom of all on earth I most highly honour, most fervently love. If, through the means of Lord Mulgrave, or any other, you could procure his liberation, a whole family's prayers of gratitude, and eyes fixed as on the throne of God with thankful and pleading tears, would form the . . . that, *I know*, rise up for you and your dear lady. S. T. COLERIDGE.

I have been so exceedingly ill that I have been able to do nothing, save that I have only to write a concluding paragraph to a moral and political defence of the Copenhagen business. I shall disgust many friends, but I do it from my *conscience*. What other motive have I?

Wordsworth to Sir George Beaumont.

Grasmere, April 8th.[1]

My dear Sir George,—I arrived here the day before yesterday, having given up my plan of going by Oxford, in consequence of the bad accounts received of the state of Miss Hutchinson's health. I found Mrs. Wordsworth and my sister well.

I left London on Sunday morning, the day, or day before, you would reach it. This was sufficiently mortifying, but could not be prevented. I had a pleasant ride to town from Dunmow, the morning being, though cold, unusually beautiful. I heard Coleridge lecture twice, and he seemed to give great satisfaction; but he was not in spirits, and suffered much during the course of the week, both in body and mind. I did not write to you, or Lady Beaumont, at Dunmow, because my departure from town was deferred from day to day; and I wished to be able to speak with certainty of my intended motions.

When you write to your mother, Lady Beaumont, pray do not fail to present to her my respectful remembrances and best thanks for her hospitable attention to me. I am very happy that I have seen her.

Coleridge and I availed ourselves of your letters to Lawrence, and saw Mr. Angerstein's pictures. The day was very unfavourable, not a gleam of sun, and the clouds were quite in disgrace. The great picture of Michel Angelo and Sebastian pleased me more than ever. The new Rembrandt has, I think, much, very much, in it to admire, but still more to *wonder at*, rather than admire. I have seen many pictures of Rembrandt which I should prefer to it. The light in the *depth* of the Temple is far the finest part of it; indeed, it is the only part of the picture which gives me very *high* pleasure; but that does highly please me. No doubt by this time you have seen Coleridge, and probably heard him lecture. I long to hear from you, and about him, what you think of the state of his health and spirits, etc. etc. Pray tell Lady Beaumont that I left my poem in C.'s possession; so that, if she wishes to read it again, she may easily procure it of him.

We live in hope that our new house will be ready for us in May. As you will guess, we are sadly cooped up here, particularly at this time. But O how happy are we altogether again! If but poor Coleridge were in the right way, we should be content, in the fulness of contentment, as I trust that, with care, we shall bring Miss Hutchinson about again. When you have seen Havill's drawing of Rydale, pray tell me what you think of it. I have not much confidence in my judgment of pictures, except when it coincides with yours.

My heart has been so occupied since my return with my own family that I have scarcely greeted or noticed the beautiful vale in which we live, and our sheltering mountains; but this is a pleasure to come. You will deem it strange, but really some of the imagery of London has, since my return hither, been more present to my mind than that of this noble vale. I left Coleridge at seven o'clock on Sunday morning, and walked towards the City in a very thoughtful and melancholy state of mind. I had passed through Temple Bar and by St. Dunstan's, noticing nothing, and entirely occupied with my own thoughts when, looking up, I saw before me

the avenue of Fleet Street, silent, empty, and pure white, with a sprinkling of new-fallen snow, not a cart or carriage to obstruct the view, no noise, only a few soundless and dusky foot-passengers here and there. You remember the elegant line of the curve of Ludgate Hill in which this avenue would terminate, and beyond, and towering above it, was the huge and majestic form of St Paul's, solemnised by a thin veil of falling snow. I cannot say how much I was affected at this unthought-of sight in such a place, and what a blessing I felt there is in habits of exalted imagination. My sorrow was controlled, and my uneasiness of mind—not quieted and relieved altogether—seemed at once to receive the gift of an anchor of security. Little remarkable occurred during my journey. We had a guard to the coach, whose first journey it was; he had been a grocer, and taken to this new way of life—and for what reason, think you?—he did not like the confinement of his old business. At Lancaster I happened to mention Grasmere in hearing of one of the passengers, who asked me immediately if one Wordsworth did not live there. I answered 'Yes.' 'He has written,' said he, 'some very beautiful poems; the critics do indeed cry out

against them and condemn them as over-simple, but for my part I read them with great pleasure; they are natural and true.' This man was also a grocer. My sheet is exhausted. Affectionate remembrances to Lady Beaumont and to Mrs. Fermor, if with you.—And believe me, my dear Sir George, your sincere friend,

W. WORDSWORTH.

[1] The postmark is April 18, 1808.—ED.

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH to LADY BEAUMONT.

Grasmere, April 20th, 1808.

My dear Friend,—We received your letter this morning, enclosing the half of a five-pound note. I am happy to inform you that the orphans[1] have been fixed under the care of very respectable people. The baby is with its sister, she who filled the mother's place in the house during their two days of fearless solitude.[2] It has clung to her ever since, and she has been its sole nurse. I went with two ladies of the *Committee* (in my sister's place, who was then confined to poor John's bedside) to conduct the family to their separate homes. The two girls were together, as I have said, two boys at another house, and the third boy by himself at the house of an elderly man, who had a particular friendship for their father. The kind reception that the children met with was very affecting . . . I am going to transcribe a poem composed by my brother a few days after his return. It was

begun in the churchyard, when he was looking at the grave of the husband and wife, and is, in fact, supposed to be entirely composed there.

'Who weeps for strangers?' etc. etc.

* * * * *

The poem[3] is to be published. Longman has consented, in spite of the odium under which my brother labours as a poet, to give him one hundred guineas per thousand copies, according to the demand.

* * * * *

[*Of Coleridge.*] 'He is a wonderful creature, pouring out such treasures of thought and knowledge almost, we may say, without premeditation, and in language so eloquent.'

* * * * *

[*Conclusion wanting?*]

[1] The Greens of Easdale, whose parents perished in a snow-storm. See the poem on *George and Sarah Green*.—ED.

[2] See De Quincey's 'Early Memorials of Grasmere' in his *Recollections of the Lakes*.—ED.

[3] *The White Doe of Rylstone*.—ED.

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH to LADY BEAUMONT.

Tuesday, 16th August.[1]

My dear Friend,—I will relate the history of my adventures in few words from the time of my parting from you at Ashby to go to bed; for I had so hurried myself away at the last from *Coleorton* that I hardly felt as if I had bid you farewell till I had closed my letter, when I was much more at ease, though sad at heart. I lay down; although I did not sleep, I rose refreshed at twelve o'clock, when the coach arrived. Willy promised that he would call to inquire after me the next day, when the landlady assured me she would give him my letter to you. I hope that she did not at the same time tell him that I went on the outside of the coach; for I am sure you and Sir George would be uneasy about me, and dear Mrs. Fermor, if she had been with you, would have been completely miserable. I was, indeed (more for the sake of my friends than myself), greatly mortified to find that there was

no room for me in the inside. Go I must; therefore there was no alternative but taking a chaise, or placing myself on the outside. I did not hesitate a moment, for I could not find in my heart to pay a guinea and a half (nay, it would have been five-and-thirty shillings) for travelling twenty miles, as the night was dry and pleasant; indeed, the air appeared to be very mild at Ashby, but I found it cold enough upon Charnwood Forest. There, by the light of the moon, and of our carriage lamps, I now and then discovered some scattered rocks; and they and everything reminded me of Coleorton, and many a time I turned my head round to look back towards that quarter where I supposed Coleorton lay. This is a pleasure I could not have had in the inside of the coach; and indeed I am sure, cold as I was, that I had a much more agreeable journey than I should have had if I had been shut up there; for the sky was very beautiful all night through, and when the dawn appeared there was a mild glory and cheerfulness in the east that was quite enchanting to me, being a sight I have so seldom seen. I warmed myself by the kitchen fire at Leicester, and went to bed at four o'clock. I did not fall asleep till very

near six, and at six I was called upon to rise. I took my breakfast with a gentleman who was going on to Stamford on the outside; and, as he was very civil, and offered to take me under his protection, and as the morning was uncommonly promising, I resolved to go on the outside; for really I dreaded the heat within. Besides, as the coach was not likely to be full, I could change my place at any time. You must not therefore be angry with me, or charge me with imprudence. I determined, believe me, to take good care of myself. I had the best place on the coach, and all the passengers were civil and well-behaved—I am sure much better company than those within, for I could judge of both at breakfast-time. Near Oakham I saw some fine woods on a hill to the left, and a large house. This they told me was Burley, and I was greatly disappointed (I supposed it to be Rugby House which Sir G. had wished me to see), and hardly able to believe my own eyes, for, though a fine house, I could discover nothing but a great heavy mass, and no towers. I was not undeceived till I came to Stamford, when I passed by the gateway of the real *Burleigh* House, and saw the irregular turrets and chimneys at a distance. By the by,

the coach stopped at Stamford while the passengers dined, and I shared my sandwiches with a young woman who was my companion on the outside. I have several times, in the course of my travels, passed through Stamford, and used to think it a very ugly place; but, to my great surprise, whichever way I looked on Friday afternoon, I saw something to admire—an old house, a group of houses, the irregular line of a street, a church, or a spire; and it was a great satisfaction to me to be in this manner delighted with what I had passed over in my youth with indifference, perhaps even disgust.

At Huntingdon I had the offer of tea, but though it would have been very refreshing, I thought it was too expensive a luxury, being only one stage from the end of my journey, therefore I walked about in the town, which was all in a bustle with gay ladies here and there and everywhere, and I saw the Sheriff in his State carriage. The evening was cold, therefore I got into the coach; and, though I was glad to be there at that time, I could not but rejoice in my past enjoyments on the outside in breathing the fresh air, and seeing all the cheerful sights of the country around me. We had six passengers

—one young lady with a bunch of honeysuckles, which added a scented poison to the hot air, and when I got out of the coach at Cambridge I was quite sick and giddy. We reached Cambridge at half-past nine. In our way to the inn we stopped at the gate of St. John's College, to set down one of our passengers. The stopping of the carriage roused me from a sleepy musing, and I was awe-stricken with the solemnity of the old gateway, and the light from a great distance within, streaming along the pavement. When they told me that it was the entrance to *St. John's* College, I was still more affected by the gloomy yet beautiful sight before me; for I thought of my dearest brother, in his youthful days, passing through that gateway to his home; and I could have believed that I saw him there even then, as I had seen him in the first year of his residence. I met with Mr. Clarkson at the inn, and was, you may believe, rejoiced to hear his voice at the coach door. We supped together, and immediately after supper I went to bed, and slept well; and at eight o'clock the next morning went to Trinity Chapel. There I stood for many minutes in silence before the statue of Newton, while the organ sounded. I

never saw a statue that gave me one-hundredth part so much pleasure—but pleasure, that is not the word: it is a sublime sensation, in harmony with sentiments of devotion to the Divine Being, and reverence for the holy places where He is worshipped. We walked in the groves all the morning, and visited the Colleges. I sought out a favourite ash-tree, which my brother speaks of in his poem on his own life—a tree covered with ivy. We dined with a Fellow of Peter-house in his rooms; and after dinner I went to King's College Chapel. There, and everywhere else at Cambridge, I was even much more impressed with the effect of the buildings than I had been formerly; and I do believe that this power of receiving an enlarged enjoyment from the sight of buildings is one of the privileges of our latter years. I have this moment received a letter from William. He reached Hindwell at ten o'clock on Friday morning and found all well, and was well himself, and Miss H. thought he looked remarkably so. He says that she is grown quite fat. I have had two letters from Grasmere—all well. I reached (*name illegible*) at nine o'clock on Sunday night. I had not time to write yesterday, for I indulged myself with

sleeping till twelve o'clock. Mrs. Clarkson was overjoyed to see me, and is in much better health. She says she never saw me look so well. I tell her she must give you and Coleorton the credit of this. Pray give my affectionate and grateful remembrances to Sir George. Do mention his health from time to time when you write. Tell me how Miss Wills is, and give my kind love to both your sisters, and do write soon, and tell me about everything that is done and that happens among you, and write as long letters as you can; but this is very unreasonable. Let me hear from you, at all events—long or short. Adieu, my dear friend.—Believe me, ever with affectionate gratitude, yours faithfully,

D. WORDSWORTH.

I ought to have told you that we had no rain but a few slight showers, though we could see that it rained all round us in all directions. I will plague you no more with such letters as this, but will have larger paper. I think I never sent you a letter that was so difficult to read. I fear it will tire you out. Tell me if you can decipher it without more trouble than it has been worth.

Pray give my love to Betty and Peggy; they will be very glad to hear of me. If you please mention me to Susan; I cannot forget her kindness to me.

[1] The year is 1808.—ED.

COLERIDGE to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

December 17th, 1808.

Dear Sir George,—If in the goodness of Providence my health and spirits continue to be what they have been since my return to Grasmere, I shall not have said unmeaningly to my friends, Decide on my moral and intellectual character from the products of the year 1809. I have received promises of contribution from writers of high reputation; and for myself, I consider THE FRIEND as the main pipe, from which I shall play off the whole accumulation and reservoir of my head and heart. And truly, as I said to a correspondent,[1] it is high time. Hitherto I have laid my eggs with ostrich carefulness, and ostrich-like oblivion. The greater part have been crushed underfoot: but some have crawled into light to furnish feathers for other men's caps, and not a few to plume the shafts in the quivers of calumny. Henceforward—

> Et nos tela, pater, ferrumque haud debile dextra
> Spargimus: et nostro sequitur de vulnere sanguis.

If this appear to you a confidence too near to

presumption, yet blame it not too severely—first, because it is an exception to my ordinary and habitual tone of self-depreciation, and because it is scarcely possible to succeed in such a work without a quickening and a throb in the pulse of hope (and what if a blush of modest shame disguise itself amid the hectic of unusual self-assertion, increasing the semblance while it is modifying the feeling?).

My first essay will be on the nature and the importance of *Principles, i.e.* of the pure Reason, which dictates unconditionally, in distinction from the prudential Understanding, which, employing its mole eyes in an impossible calculation of consequences, perverts and mutilates its own being, untenanting the function which it is incapable of occupying. This is infidelity, essential infidelity, however goodly its garb, however seemly its name; and this I have long deemed the disease, nay, let me speak out, the *guilt* of the age; therefore, and not *chiefly* because it has produced a spirit of inquiry into the external evidences of instituted religion, it is an infidel age. Will the truth of the tale exculpate me from the crime of personal calumny, if I illustrate (thus, and to you alone, and in a confidential

letter) my general charge by a particular instance? If I tell you that I know a Bishop, an English Bishop, who, professing Socinianism (not indeed all the heresies of Drs. Priestley and Co., but absolutely all the distinguishing tenets of Socinus), affirms the innocence and the duty of uttering adoration and *ultimate* prayer to Christ, whom he yet zealously contends to have been, and to be, not only a finite creature, but a mere *man!*—adding, I can see no harm in this practice, it leaves untouched all the motives of pure reward and punishment, which is the *essence* of religion—(Merciful Heaven! *this* the essence of that religion which permits the degraded man to commence with terror only as the means of enabling him finally to arrive at itself, which is perfect love shutting out fear)—shall I hesitate to deem such a man an infidel who rejects the fundamental *principle* of all religion, propounded amid the thunders of Mount Sinai, and revealed even to heathen philosophers by 'the still small voice' of conscience, simply because in counting the consequences that people the tiny field of his dim vision, he had seen no harm from it? No, dear and honoured Sir George! I dare not hesitate—nor would a library of evidences and

apologies composed by him invalidate my conviction, or annul the sentence. If from heresy in faith I pass to error in the management of nations—but I shrink from it. The groans of ruin from amid the ruins of sunken Europe month after month still repeat the direful truth—and the sole hope of afflicted humanity, if any hope there be, rises up in a nation which essays to build its stronghold of defence and offence on the rock of unconditional *principle*, which has proclaimed with solemnity that it is a less evil for man, woman, and child through a whole kingdom to die by the sword of war, than for the same persons to exist enslaved and vicious. This heroic nation, loyal even to death, the cometary monster who hides beneath his gorgeous or within his iron crown of usurpation, looks still loathly from the putrid cup of Jacobin liberty, howls his hoarse laugh at a rebellious mob of fanatical democrats, as the genuine descendants of Don Quixote. Don Quixote! I should glory in the descent if to have the Corsican at the root of my ancestral tree were the only alternative. There was more wisdom in the heart of that illustrious madman than that of all France, were it assembled in one head. But my track in *The Friend* confines me to common

life, and to men acting as individuals in the daily toils and pleasures of common life—and here I see before me an ample harvest of facts; and I am well content that such *is* the direction of my road; for I listen with gladness and an obedient ear to prudence, while it remains subordinate to, and in harmony with, a loftier and more authoritative voice—that of *principle*.

I have dwelt thus on the *subject* of my first essay, because this will be, more or less avowedly, the *object* of all the succeeding papers—for reflect only on the enormous power which for a small time a mere individual can acquire (an Hatfield, for instance) by a total emancipation of the will from all the laws of general morality. What, then, must be the power when one pre-eminently wicked man wields the whole strength and cunning of a wicked nation? Is there any strength adequate to resist this? Yes! one, and only one. Consistency, energy, and unanimity in national wickedness must be counterbalanced by consistency and undistracted energy in national virtue, which, fully exerted, bring with them, from the recesses of their own nature, a greater consistency of more enduring energy. The atrocious contempt of all moral

must be met by an heroic contempt of all physical consequences, and justice must act to the full stretch of its rights, where wickedness admits no other limit than that of its power. If there were ever a time when the sublime truth of the apostle ('we live by faith alone') was more especially important than at any preceding, it is the present epoch. Without faith we perish; and without principle,—pure, unconditioned principle —there can be no faith. May God bless you and yours.—I remain, dear Sir George, with unfeigned respect, your obliged and grateful friend, S. T. COLERIDGE.

[1] To Mr. T. Poole Coleridge wrote on Oct. 14, 1803: 'I lay too many eggs with ostrich carelessness, and ostrich oblivion; and, although many are luckily trodden on and smashed, too many crawl forth into life, some to furnish feathers for the caps of others, and more, alas! to plume the shafts in the quiver of my enemies, and of "them that lie in wait against my soul."'—ED.

COLERIDGE to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

January 2, 1809.

Dear Sir George,—There is not a sentence in your kind letter to which I do not assent with my whole head and heart. To deny the *fitness* of motives from a future state to *any* class of men, or the urgent *need* of such motives for *very many* men, I deem not only unpsychological but pernicious. Nay, the most exalted finite being must need the faith in immortality as giving to virtue an adequate *object* and *consequence*, although in the very *idea* of virtue it should have found a sufficient *impulse*, an adequate *ground* of action. But, dear Sir George, as natural and necessary as motives of hope and fear (indefinite) are to vicious men in the process of leading them to a nobler state, even so necessary is it for *all* men, the bad as well as the good, that the *idea* of virtue should exist, and a faith in its reality, else we sacrifice the ends to the means. But I shall more clearly convey my meaning when I

have in my first essay shown the nature, and evinced the power, of *principles*. Are we not a union of reason, understanding, and sense (*i.e.* the senses)? As necessary as *perceptions* are to the senses, so necessary are *rules* to the understanding; and as necessary as *rules* to the understanding, so necessary are *principles* to the reason. For our sensuous nature would give us only instinct, our understanding could only superadd cunning or prudence; in REASON lies the possibility of virtue. The habit of realising as far as we can the practical *ideas* of reason, by availing ourselves of the powers of the *understanding* and the *sense*, is human wisdom. In my essay these thoughts will be developed *popularly*. This is my definition of a *just popular* style: When the author has had his own eye fixed steadily on the *abstract*, yet permits his readers to see only the *concrete*. It is a whim of modern date to consider Christianity as a mere code of ethics. This seems to me a degradation of the New Testament. It is an offer of redemption from moral evil and its consequences, with a declaration of the conditions of acceptance. This indeed contains all the great principles of morality, but only as a *part*. It contains *medi-*

cines, too, for those incapable of immediate virtue —not only rules to walk *well,* but means by which the lame, the palsied spirit, may regain the possibility of walking *at all.* But be it remembered that though the vessel must be cleansed before the new wine be poured in, yet the act of washing out the cup is not the infusion of the wine, and be it remembered that the WORD of God did not exclusively bid men avoid the wrath to come. *He* likewise said, 'Be ye *perfect,* even as your Father in heaven is perfect.' And we are assured that unless that *fear* which is the *beginning* of wisdom shall not proceed to LOVE, there can be no union with God, for God is love. To the *diseased,* Christ says, 'Love yourselves so as to leave your *vices,*' but to the *convalescent,* 'Love your neighbours as yourselves; and God *above all.*' What then do I blame? Him who *couches* the blind eye? God forbid! Whom then? Him who lets the light in on the couched eye slowly and gradually? As little. But those I blame who would convert the temporary curtain before the window into a windowless wall—a perpetual exclusion of light. Those who, with Dr. Paley in his chapter on Moral Obligation, annihilate the *idea* of virtue by placing

its *essence* in selfishness, and say *implicitly, Obey* God, *benefit* your neighbour, but *love* YOURSELVES above all. One more observation—a very important one—and I conclude. I more than doubt whether a *mere* feeling of selfishness would ever be called into action by Christ, or considered as a possible means of leading vicious men to the capability of virtue. I recollect no instance in the *New* Testament in which it is said, 'Be temperate and chaste, in order that you may enjoy the keen pleasures, of which health is the necessary condition,' still less any passage which says, 'Be honest, and God will make you rich.' But I recollect many passages in which rewards are offered in a future state, and punishments threatened. Wherein lies the difference? In this: that in the belief of the latter there is *implied* a FAITH, a submission of the fleshly sense to the moral being, which is in very deed the *beginning* of wisdom, and the *ground* and *condition* of virtue. Besides, it is not only the shadowiness of all prospects beyond the grave, and the uncertainty accompanying them in the bodily feelings and imagination that remove these hopes and fears from mere selfishness; this removal is further affected by the *generic*

nature of these consequences. What I hope for myself I hope for all men. I cannot hope heaven for myself as myself, but for all good men, in the number of which *I* may be included. No act of thought or feeling necessarily *social* can be absolutely *selfish*—not therefore the *insisting* on heaven and the place of death do I object to, but to such representations of reward and punishment as tend to take away the virtuous leaven, to make them more selfish than they are in their own nature. Now the bad process is carried on in two ways: *first*, by giving the vulgarest and most material images, not as images, but as the truth of the reality—thus, by a most perverse alchemy, transmuting spirit into grossest body, instead of leading through the body to the spirit; *secondly*, by excluding from reality and belief all *nobler* prospects, and presenting an image of Christianity, with *no crown* on the head, no sceptre in the hand. There are fewer men than is generally supposed so utterly denaturalised as to have no *dawning* at all of the truth and the true idea of goodness; and wherever there does exist even a dawn of that idea, it lends a *force* to the selfish motives, which we more often underrate than exaggerate. From

opposites (say the logicians), 'non datur transitus nisi per intermedium.' Now that state, which is selfish, yet not wholly selfish; not virtuous, yet not wholly without virtue, is the intermedium that makes it possible to pass from vice to holiness—that state therefore Christianity attempts to produce in the *first* instance, and he who would preach as a Christian dare deprive it of *neither* of its constituent parts. Finally, dear Sir George, this is my faith: that Christianity is a divine religion, which acknowledges the *existing state* of human nature with more than all the *historic* truth of the Epicurean philosophy, and yet establishes an *ideal* of virtue in all the severity of the Stoic—at once avoiding the baseness of the one, and the bloating visionariness of the other. This is a very dull letter; but even its prolixity, though it may tire you, yet will not be unpleasing as an evidence of the value I set on your esteem.—With affectionate and respectful mind, S. T. COLERIDGE.

Miss Wordsworth will write to Lady B. in a few days.

SOUTHEY to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Keswick, July 17, 1809.

Dear Sir,—You will, I trust, excuse me for troubling you with a letter upon my own concerns, because it may possibly be in your power to render me an essential service. Some little time since I was informed by Walter Scott that Mr. Canning had expressed a wish to serve me, and the result of some conversation which they held upon the subject was that Scott should inquire of me in what manner it might most conveniently be done. A few years ago I would gladly have gone to Portugal; my uncle has now left that country. One main inducement is thus removed, and if it were necessary to enter into detail, it might be shown that I should act imprudently, in the worldly sense of the word, by accepting anything that would be given me there. The immediate emoluments would not support me, and for the prospects which might be held out hereafter, I am neither young enough to enter upon, nor ambitious

enough to desire them. To speak more truly, my ambition is fixed upon better things. There is, however, a situation which it would perfectly suit me to hold: it is the stewardship for the Derwentwater estates, now held by a Mr. Walton, and expected soon to be vacated by his death, as I am informed by Mr. Sharp, who indeed advised me to apply for it. Accordingly I mentioned it to Scott; his answer is that the thing seems feasible, but that it would be of great consequence to obtain Lord Lonsdale's countenance, as his recommendation will probably command that and everything else which falls in this country. These being the circumstances, may I ask you to apply to Lord Lonsdale in my behalf? The situation is desirable, because it would suit my place of abode, and give me the power of preserving the woods. My circumstances also are such that I must not refuse any fair opportunity of improving them; and this opportunity having been offered, I trust you will excuse me for taking the only means in my power.

I beg my respects to Lady Beaumont. Mrs. Coleridge and her sisters would desire to be remembered if they knew that I were writing,

but it is my rule of life to have as little to do as possible with hopes and fears myself, and never to communicate them unnecessarily to any one. For the literary news of these mountains—heaven knows when you will see another number of *The Friend*. To me and Wordsworth it is a sore grief, and earnestly did we wish that you might never see the first. A volume of my *History of Brazil* is far advanced in the press, and I shall send a rhymed romance to the printer as soon as it is determined in what manner to publish it.

Poor Mr. Jackson[1] has long been dying by inches, and cannot hold out much longer. I am taking a lease of these premises for one-and-twenty years, and it is doubtful whether he may live to execute it, averse as he is to anything like business, and as I am to pressing it upon him. Mrs. Wilson is his faithful and indefatigable nurse. She, I hope, will pass the remainder of her days with us, and it is fortunate for her that the affection which she has formed for our children will in some measure supply the loss she must so soon sustain.—Believe me, Sir, yours very respectfully, ROBERT SOUTHEY.

[1] The original of Wordsworth's *Waggoner*, who lived at Greta Hall.—ED.

SOUTHEY to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Kesnick, Oct. 12, 1809.

My dear Sir,—Having gone thus far through life—not indeed without receiving kind offices, but without ever having solicited them,—it requires some effort to expose myself to the hazard of being thought obtrusive by you, for a second application. I have a brother in the Navy, and it has been advised me by Williams Wynn (who in all things concerning my welfare has long been my privy counsellor) to make application in his behalf, and get him, if possible, in the list of post-captains, he having been ten years a lieutenant. Wynn wished me to avail myself of Mr. Canning's expressed good-will to this effect; but it appears to me from what passed respecting the Derwentwater stewardship that Mr. C. has little influence at the Admiralty, and indeed were it otherwise, and I a bolder asker than I have yet learned to be, this would not be a time to trouble him with my concerns. It is said that Lord Mulgrave intends soon to make a large pro-

motion of admirals, and this is the circumstance which made Wynn exhort me immediately to make application. What I have further to state will, I hope, justify me for applying to you, and requesting your influence in a matter which interests me so nearly.

My brother is at present first lieutenant of Admiral Sotheby's ship. His lieutenancy he earned by his services, having distinguished himself in the action between the Mars and L'Hercule, an important action upon the whole for him, because Captain Hood, who was his friend, was killed in it. Twice he has been disappointed of promotion when he had every prospect of it, first by the recall of Sir Samuel Hood from the West Indies, afterwards by the displacement of Mr. Grenville. There is now no chance of getting forward in the course of service; all opposition upon the sea is at an end. Nothing is to be done except by personal interest.

Admiral Sotheby's ship is likely to go into dock, and in that case will be paid off. My brother's situation cannot be altered for the better in his present rank, and it unfortunately happens that the longer a man remains in that rank, the worse does his situation become, for

this reason, that most captains have their own first lieutenants, and as there are few ships in which one of ten years' standing would not take that place by seniority, old lieutenants are usually disposed of in gun-brigs and small craft, the least reputable and the most uncomfortable part of the Navy. There is one circumstance which renders me peculiarly anxious to obtain promotion for him. We have an uncle, a wealthy man, possessing property, which in the common course of inheritance would have devolved upon us instead of him, as children of an elder brother. He is a man of that sort of disposition that the less his relations wanted his estates, the more he would be disposed to bequeath them as he ought to do. If Tom were Captain Southey he would in all probability be appointed his heir; if he remains what he is, the whole, there is every reason to believe, will be left to strangers. I have little doubt that a captain commission would secure to my brother an estate of a thousand a year. I could mention another circumstance more important to his happiness, and little less so to his welfare, to which the want of professional rank, and the prospect which it opens, is the obstacle; and this consideration it is

which induces me, reluctant as I am, once more to solicit your good offices with Lord Mulgrave.

I do not wish to have him employed, confident as I should be that if he were on the Spanish coast he would eminently distinguish himself. To promote him and send him ashore would be conferring upon me the highest obligation. Family ties grow stronger as we advance in life, and they become fewer in number. There are few persons who are so rich in friends as I am. But among them all there is not one who loves me so dearly and entirely as he does. Nor is there that possible circumstance which would contribute so greatly to my happiness as to have him settled here beside the Lake.

I know not, Sir George, in what manner to apologise for an application which I am so little entitled to make. Yet I should have reproached myself had I not made it. The motive must plead for me, and I will rely upon your goodness to excuse me, if it should not be in your power to do more.—Your health, I hope, is better than it was. Present my respects to Lady Beaumont, and believe me, yours respectfully, and very thankfully for your late interference,

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

SOUTHEY to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Keswick, Oct. 20, 1809.

My dear Sir,—When my last letter to you was past recall I felt for the first time in my life dissatisfied for having done what I had persuaded myself it was my duty to do. A sense of humiliation hung upon me, as if I had taken advantage of one favour to press for another, and as if the motives which justified me to myself might not be sufficient to justify me to you. Notwithstanding the kindness with which you have replied, something of this feeling still remains, and I confess it, not merely as the only apology which it is in my power to offer, but as a proof also how earnestly I must have desired to succeed in the application before I could resolve to make it.

I had understood that with good interest it was not more difficult to obtain two steps than one; and in this error Wynn confirmed me by mentioning the highest rank when he urged me to apply to Mr. Canning. It would however be

a great thing to obtain one step, and if that could be gained it would give me a deeper feeling of joy than any other circumstance of my life. My very slight knowledge of Lord Lonsdale could not authorise me in applying to him. I also know that he has many applications of a like nature upon the score of county and borough connections, which must necessarily be paramount with him. If Lord Melville were at the Admiralty, Walter Scott would use his influence for me. From Mr. Grenville I had a distant promise, and an assurance when he went out of office that if he had made any further promotions than that of merely filling up vacancies at that time my brother should have been included. It was some compliment to say so, but otherwise there was very little satisfaction in that preter-perfect-sense potential. At present this is the only channel through which I can apply. Had you been with me when you were at Keswick fewer excuses on my part would have been necessary than I feel now the wish, rather than the power, to offer. You would have seen a man with all the best parts of a sailor's character, and equally qualified to do honour to his profession at sea or on shore.

Poor Jackson is at rest. His property he has bequeathed to a brother, who has a living near Thrapston, in Northamptonshire, and is much patronised by Lord Sackville, who at this time pays his expenses as a fellow-commoner at Cambridge, that he may qualify himself by taking a degree to hold another benefice. He is here at present, and I have never seen a more thoroughly respectable man, nor one whose appearance spoke more strongly in his favour.

The real reason why the last *Friend* was delayed is a curious one. The manuscript was in due time in the printers' hands, and the rats ate up the motto the night before it should have been set up. It was a whole page of Hooker, and as those vermin are to be classed among the Independents, they must certainly have found it hard of digestion.

We beg to be remembered to Lady Beaumont. —Believe me, my dear Sir, very thankfully and respectfully yours, ROBERT SOUTHEY.

I go to press shortly with a poem which may be considered as an experiment in metre. It is in rhyme as irregular as that of Scott, but pitched in a higher key. The rhythm and freedom of

blank verse are preserved, and the rhyme thrown in in every part of the line. The matter is as original as the manner, and both too much so to please any persons except the score or two whose opinions in fine literature should be regarded like thôse of the twelve judges in law.

SOUTHEY to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Keswick, Dec. 1, 1809.

My dear Sir,—I am much obliged by your letter, and no otherwise sorry that your application to Lord Mulgrave has been deferred than because of the circumstance which occasions the delay. On other accounts it is rather convenient that it should have been delayed, inasmuch as my brother stands in a somewhat different situation. Admiral Sotheby has made him Acting Commander in the Lyra brig; the object therefore at present is to solicit a confirmation of that appointment. This I believe it is the custom of the Admiralty not to grant, for the sake of preserving the patronage to itself; but if any interest can be made for an officer holding such conditional rank, they take an early opportunity of promoting him, though he is set aside at first. I have therefore good hope that your kind interference will be successful.

Coleridge has so pleasantly confuted my expectations concerning *The Friend* that I begin to

look confidently forward to a continuance of his exertions. He seems to be taking the advice of all his friends, and putting the reader in better humour. I hope that dreadful story in the thirteenth number is not true, and have almost convinced myself that it is not. I remember, however, to have read of a religious madness which prevailed in Denmark (I think), and not above half a century ago, precisely similar to the case in question. A set of fanatics had persuaded themselves that the best way to ensure their own salvation was by committing murder, in order that they might suffer death and die in a state of repentance; and they preferred children for their victims on account of their innocence. It was only put a stop to by condemning them to perpetual imprisonment. I cannot recollect where I met with this fact, it is so many years ago, but of it I have a full and perfect recollection; it is probably to be found in one of the earliest 'Annual Registers.' It seems to me that upon this foundation some German *horrorist* has made up Coleridge's story, for however monstrous the defects of law and justice in any part of Europe, it is scarcely possible that execution under such circumstances

could have been ordered. Coleridge has related the story very finely, but the description of Maria's voice and countenance is too beautiful for its place; it is too much like poetry. We should beware of mingling fancy with the narration of what we believe to be truth,—I mean to say of weaving it into, and making it part of, the story. However true the circumstances, an air of fiction is thrown over them whenever this is done.

My poem is finished, and in course of correction and transcription for the press. I am on the point of beginning another upon Pelayo, the father of the Spanish kings,—a subject long since chosen, but made especially interesting to me now from its applicability to the existing state of Spain. My hope, or rather my faith, of the ultimate success of the Spaniards continues unshaken and unabated, notwithstanding the imbecility of the Junta (to give it no harsher name) and the miserable manner in which the strength of this country has been wasted. That army which was sent to rot in the cursed islands of Walcheren might have exterminated every Frenchman in the Peninsula, and have given a mortal wound to the Buonapartes. Even now

this might be done, but I confess myself quite hopeless that anything great will be effected by the present set of Ministers, or by any who are likely to supplant them. The people of England will always save themselves, even though Buonaparte could bridge the Channel; but their rulers will never deliver Europe. I groan in bitterness of spirit at the thought how surely and certainly it might be delivered if Peterborough or Wolfe or Chatham were among us!

Our ladies join with me in respects to Lady Beaumont.—Believe me, my dear Sir, very respectfully and truly yours,

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH to LADY BEAUMONT.

Grasmere, Thursday, December 28th, 1809.

My dear Friend,—Yesterday evening I returned with our whole family from the house of the very person whom you inquire after with so much anxiety. In our way thither on Christmas Day I received your letter, and wished to have answered it from that place, but I could not find leisure to take up my pen, and now I am at home again I am determined to make no further delay. Surely I have spoken to you (not by word of mouth, but by letter) of Mr. Wilson,[1] a young man of some fortune, who has built a house in a very fine situation not far from Bowness. Miss Hutchinson, Johnny, and I spent a few days there last summer with his mother and sister, and I think I mentioned this to you. This same Mr. Wilson is the author of the letter signed Mathetes. He has from his very boyhood been a passionate admirer of my brother's writings; and before he went to Oxford he

ventured to write a long letter to my brother respecting some poems, and expressing his deep gratitude for the new joy and knowledge which his writings had opened out to him. Several years after this he bought a small estate near Windermere, and began to build a house. In the meantime, however, he fitted up a room in a cottage near the new building, and by degrees made little improvements in the cottage, till it is become so comfortable that, though the large house is finished, he has no wish to remove, and seems, indeed, to have no motive, as the cottage is large enough to accommodate himself and his mother and sister and two or three friends, and as they are all pleased with the snugness and comfort of their present modest dwelling; indeed, he often regrets that he built the larger house. If however he should marry (which is very likely) he will find it necessary. His mother and sister are at present at Edinburgh (where, in fact, their home is,) but they are so much pleased with the country that for the last two years they have spent more than half their time here; and we all, including Mr. de Quincey and Coleridge, have been to pay the bachelor a Christmas visit, and we enjoyed ourselves very

much, in a pleasant mixture of merriment and thoughtful discourse. He is a very interesting young man, of noble dispositions, and fine ingenuous feelings; but, having lost his father in early youth, and having had a command of money to procure pleasures at a cheap rate, and having that yielding disposition of which he speaks, which makes him ready to discover virtues that do not really exist in minds greatly inferior to his own (which have yet a sufficient share of qualities in sympathy with his own to draw them to him at first), his time has often been idly spent in the pursuit of idle enjoyments; and dissatisfaction with himself has followed. He had been more than a year in this neighbourhood before he could resolve to call upon my brother—this from modesty and a fear of intruding upon him; but since that time we have had frequent intercourse with him, and are all most affectionately attached to him. He has the utmost reverence for my brother, and has no delight superior to that of conversing with him; and he has often said that he is indebted to him for preserving the best part of his nature, and for the most valuable knowledge he possesses. He is now twenty-three years of age. Probably

before this letter reaches you, you will have received the ninteenth number of *The Friend*, which contains the continuation of my brother's reply to Mathetes's letter. Mr. Wilson sent the letter to Coleridge, and Coleridge requested my brother to reply to it, he being at leisure, and disposed at that time to write something for *The Friend*. You will be glad to hear that he is going to finish the poem of *The White Doe*, and is resolved to publish it when he has finished it to his satisfaction.

I should not have been so slow to thank you for the most interesting narrative of the life of 'an English Hermit' if I had not been particularly engaged during the last fortnight. My sister has been at Kendal (we met her at Mr. Wilson's on her way home), and during her absence I was employed in arranging the books and putting the house into order, we having only just got rid of workmen, who had been about the house ever since the month of July. I told you the history of the chimneys, and Mr. Crump has been throwing out a recess with a large bow window in my brother's study. This obliged us to have the books stowed in the lodging-rooms in heaps; and you will guess that it was no

trifling labour to put them all in their places again upon the shelves. We have had much discomfort from the workmen; but, now that it is over, we think ourselves amply repaid, the room being so much improved. The new window looks towards the crags and wood behind the house, and a most interesting prospect it is, especially in the winter-time, when the goings-on of Nature are so various. Coleridge has been very well of late, and very busy, as you will judge when I tell you that he has published a series of essays in *The Courier*, on the Spanish affairs. We wish very much that you should see them. They have been published within the last fortnight. I do not recollect the date of the first; but you may easily, I should think, procure the papers by applying to any friend who takes them in; for, as Coleridge has signed his name, and as they have been so recently published, they will be easily collected together. In the nineteenth or sixteenth number of *The Friend* Coleridge has desired that the purchasers of *The Friend* will pay their money into the hands of Mr. Ward, bookseller, in Skinner Street. I do not recollect the number — I mean of Mr. Ward's shop—but you will easily

find it by referring to *The Friend,* or, if it be more convenient, the money may be sent to Grasmere. We have received the books from Coleorton. We were much affected by your account of the good old Lady Beaumont's reception of you at Dunmow. What an affecting and instructive spectacle the sight of such a woman at her years! You have not mentioned Sir George's health lately. I trust he is pretty well. May God grant you both many years of comfort and happiness!—Believe me ever, with grateful affection, your faithful friend,

D. WORDSWORTH.

I ought to have said more of the pleasure we received from the interesting history of the Hermit, but I have not room for it. Coleridge wishes it could be published in *The Friend,* but perhaps this cannot be allowed. I was mistaken. The answer to Mathetes's letter does not come out in the next *Friend,* but the next but one.

[1] Afterwards Professor Wilson of Edinburgh, the 'Christopher North' of *Blackwood's Magazine.*—ED.

COLERIDGE to LADY BEAUMONT.

Sunday, 21st January 1810.
Grasmere, Kendal.

Dear Madam,—I have not been insensible of your kind remembrances of me, in your various letters to Miss Wordsworth, and of the unremitted interest which your Ladyship has taken in my weekly labours. Not a letter has arrived from your Ladyship which did not awaken and re-awaken the design of writing to yourself, or to Sir George; and that I have not realised it I will not attribute to want of *time* (though that is pretty fully occupied, my health and the habits that result from it considered), but to a truer cause: the want of tranquillity. For since the recommencement of *The Friend*, at the third number, scarcely a fortnight has passed in which I have not been compelled to struggle with some fresh and unforeseen difficulty: and more than once what I had taken for an island plunged away downward from under my feet, and left me to

Providence and my own efforts, to swim or sink. My subscribers drop in so slowly with their payments that at this moment I am as unable to determine whether the work can be continued, as I was at the publication of the 20th number. I will, if it please God to permit me, carry it on with increased zeal and spirit, as long as it pays its own expenses; and enable myself to do this by working *over-hours* for the newspapers, which, and reviewing, are the only modes of literary labour the pecuniary results of which can be relied upon. From the latter I am precluded, as I deem anonymous criticism altogether immoral, and our *reviews* without any exception among the most pernicious publications of the age, and as aggravating the disease of which they are the symptoms. (One among many reasons for this opinion your Ladyship will see in the introduction to my 21st number; but I shall hereafter treat the subject at large.) My own hopes concerning *The Friend* are at dead low-water. Of the small number that have paid in their subscriptions, two-thirds nearly have discontinued the work. My house-mates expect better things, and would fain persuade themselves that those who meant to discontinue the work would,

for their own sakes, have given the earliest intimation. I should have thought the same myself two months ago, but my reliance on any argument which supposes any *delicacy* of conscience, in that class of persons who form perhaps the major part of my list of subscribers, is very feeble. One instance among *many*:—among the names given in to me at the commencement of *The Friend* was that of the Earl of Cork. On the appearance of the advertisement where and to whom the money was to be paid, a letter came from his Lordship, informing me in very uncourtly language that he had never ordered the work, and therefore should not pay for it; but the numbers which he had *quietly* received week after week, he never thought proper to send back, or even to hint that he was ready to do so. The true secret of the ill success of *The Friend* hitherto (I would be understood as speaking of causes *external* to the *kind* and *execution* of the work itself) is this: the majority of the original subscribers, who were quite *numerous* enough to have made the work generally known, if it had pleased or suited them, was procured by private solicitation, and at least one-half, I am well assured, answered 'Yes' merely to avoid the

greater immediate unpleasantness of saying 'No.' What *minds*, or rather what *bodies*, I had to deal with, your Ladyship will find no difficulty in conjecturing from a phrase contained in a letter to me from Mr. Clarkson, to whose application I owed from sixty to seventy names—(it was after the appearance of the 5th number that he wrote to me)—'You ought to consider that *The Friend* is a very *dear* work—what if I had charged a shilling per sheet for *my* work?—and that fifty-two shillings a year is a serious sum for a person to *bestow* upon one author.' Pity that Mr. C. had not added—'when there are so many other *objects* of distress that have equal or stronger claims on the charitable.' Now, I will say nothing of the powers and acquirements (and the sums sunk in the means of developing the one and making the other), the previous possession of which is supposed in such a work, though, as we always admit this in favour of lawyers and physicians, why should it be denied to the expounders of the law of the mind, to the physicians of the spirit? But *The Friend* is sold at the same price as Cobbett's *Journal*, of the same size as that, and stamped like it; and the whole is original matter, while two-thirds of Cobbett's is reprinted,

and what is original does for the greater part consist in angry comments on large extracts from the morning papers of the week, and the speeches in Parliament. I have not the slightest desire to detract from Mr. Cobbett's merits. He is, assuredly, a man of great natural vigour of mind; but he himself, I doubt not, would allow that this is the very easiest of all possible modes of composition, and that the very *choice* of the *subjects* in a work like *The Friend* demands a greater effort of thought than is required for the *writing* of one of his letters. The *Spectator*, at the time that the value of money was considerably more than double its present value, was sold at *twopence*. Wordsworth has amused himself with making the calculation, and finds that each number of *The Friend* contains the quantity of FIVE *Spectators*. Remove the duty from each (each *Spectator* was taxed one farthing) and the *nominal* sum remains the same, the real value more than one-half in favour of the *Spectator*. Sixteen numbers of *The Friend* would make two quarto volumes of the size of Mr. Fox's posthumous work, if printed in the same manner.

It is not wholly from weakness of mind that I have troubled your Ladyship with a detail so

remote from your habits of thinking and feeling; but for that very reason, because it is so remote; for the wider our sympathies the more enlarged do our spirits become, and it is only by the knowledge of concerns remote from our own that our sympathies can be widened. But to finish the subject,—the subscribers thus gained not only did not serve the work, but were of serious disservice to it. Many abandoned it without any previous warning, and both these, and those who from motives of civility continued it to the 20th, alike joined in giving out *The Friend* as an *unreadable* thing—dull, paradoxical, abstruse, dry, obscure, and Heaven knows what else! —as if they had wished to take revenge on *me* for the shillings they had lost in consequence of their own weakness! For the prospectus bears witness that I gave them no reason to expect that it would be more amusing than it has been.

I am myself completely at rest. I have done my best, and have received many letters which furnish proof, not by empty praise, but by the feelings which they develop, that even in its infancy *The Friend* has done some good—and an unspeakable comfort it is to reflect that what good it does must be of a permanent kind.

I dare affirm, after long, repeated, and most religious self-examination, that my sole motive in the undertaking has been, and still is, to enable myself *to* do what good I can, *by doing* what good I can; and that I receive a deeper delight from the knowledge that I have half a dozen readers like your sister than I should have from as large a promiscuous sale as avarice could crave, or vanity dream of early in life. I had my share of vanity, though at the worst it appeared greater than it was from my natural open-heartedness, and from being so mixed with the necessity of sympathising and being sympathised with; and likewise with another pleasure quite distinct from vanity: that of witnessing *outward proofs* of a power, of which I had attained no steady conviction in my own mind, much less any comparative scale. One mark of this was, that I never in my life defended or attacked any opinion except for itself; nor ever that I remember took different sides of a question in different companies, to *show off* my 'colloquial prowess.' At present I am more inclined to shun than seek reputation for its own sake, and exclusive of its contingent consequences in the increase of my utility—using the word,

reputation in its etymological sense, as the opinions of those who *re-suppose* the suppositions of others. 'Quod hic *putavit*, ille reputat,'—re-echoes an echo. FAME (from the Greek φήμι = the Latin *fari*) is indeed a worthy object of pursuit for all men, and to seek it is even as solemn a duty for men endowed with more than ordinary powers of mind: first, as multiplying the ways and chances by which a useful work comes into the hands of such as are prepared to avail themselves of it; secondly, as securing for such a work that submissiveness of heart, that *docility*, without which nothing really good can be really acquired; and lastly, because the *individuality* of the author, with all the associations connected with his name and history, adds greatly both to the pleasure and the effect of a work. Who does not read *Othello* with greater delight from the knowledge that it was written by the author of *Hamlet*, etc. etc.,—that it is SHAKESPEARE'S! Besides (a more subtle, but not unimportant reason), individuality is essential to the exercise of our moral *freedom*, and if the latter be a most sacred duty, it must likewise be our duty to secure for it its best and most natural *sphere* of action. *Fame* is truly

the synonym of *fatum* (quod optimi homines *fati* sunt)—the fate-like sentence of the good and wise in a succession of generations, who inevitably decide the ultimate character of works of actions from the *permanence* of clear insight, and the *fidelity* of disinterested love, compared with the craving after novelty, and with those malignant passions which are under an equal necessity of changing and varying their objects. But from this, your Ladyship will perceive, it follows as a corollary, that the party of evil and of weakness will, in the natural course of things, be the more operative in and for their generation; because the aching sense of inward infirmity, want of all deep and thorough conviction, and the necessity of roaming abroad—first for new objects, and then for proselytes to confirm them in their own half-belief,—will goad the children of folly to ceaseless activity. Thence parties are formed; and so a party spirit, and clamour, and bustle, and *hardness* of feeling secure them a temporary victory. Good men are shy and modest; and, being satisfied with their own deep convictions, they spread their opinions slowly and quietly just where they chance to find openings of sympathy. But good

men ought to think of this, and the examples of Dr. Bell and of Mr. Clarkson are therefore invaluable; so much so, that I struggle to forget that the latter would be a case more in point, if an original coarseness of mind had not made the labours and toils of beneficence less difficult to him, than they would have been to a man of equal benevolence, but of a finer tact and more exquisite sensibility. Still, his example shows what *one* good man may do when he goes to the work in right earnest. Were virtue as active by energy of will as vice is by the necessity of its own restlessness, it would be plenipotent.

Miss W. will probably have informed your Ladyship how deeply I was interested with the account of the hermit. If it has not been published, I should like to publish it in *The Friend*, with remarks. Of Jacob Böhme I have myself been a commentator, from Plato, Plotinus, Proclus, and some Catholic writers of the *Vie Intérieure*. But for myself, I must confess I never brought away from his works anything I did not bring to them. It is a maxim with me, always *to suppose myself ignorant of a writer's understanding, until I understand his ignorance*! This I have not yet deciphered to myself in

the Teutonic Theosopher; yet I conjecture that, being ignorant of Logic, and not versed in the laws of the imagination, he rendered many *intuitions* in his own mind, perhaps of very profound truths, and, as it were, *translated* them with such *images*, and *bodily* feelings, as *by accident* were co-present with his intuitions. It is plain that the words and phenomena of certain chemical experiments with quicksilver and sulphur (which he learnt from Fludd, or disciples of Fludd) were present to his fancy while he was delving into the possible state of being prior to consciousness, (see *The Three Principles*, pp. 10, 11, etc.,) and of the association of bodily feelings, voluntarily forced, with thought, (see the ridiculous analysis of the word 'mercurius,' with the separate meanings of Mer, Cu, Ri, and Us.) To doubt that this is pure fantastic wilfulness would not be modesty, but ingratitude to the light of reason. Yet Jacob Böhme was an extraordinary man. I do not think you will derive any advantage from his works; the worst and most suspicious circumstance in them is that they dwell so much on *shapes* and *fancies*, and things which of course would delight the *curiosity*, *whereas to act* is the duty of man and his essential character,

and the most important of all truths can be revealed only *by* and *in* action. If it please God, I shall shortly publish, as a supplement to the first volume of *The Friend,* a work of considerable size and very great labour—the toil of many years — entitled *The Mysteries of Religion,* grounded in or relative to the mysteries of human nature; or the foundations of morality laid in the primary faculties of man. Some parts of the 'Aurora' and of 'The Three Principles' may possibly become somewhat clearer to you after the perusal of my work. Either in this, or in some after number of *The Friend,* I shall give the character of Jacob Böhme, and compare him with John Fox, and both with Giordano Bruno. The most beautiful and orderly development of this philosophy, which endeavours to explain all things by an analysis of consciousness, and builds up a world in the mind out of materials furnished by the mind itself, is to be found in the *Platonic Theology* by Proclus. A part of it has been translated by Taylor, but so translated that difficult Greek is transmuted into incomprehensible English.

One observation I must make concerning the plan and style of *The Friend,* in answer to Sir

George's kind advice to me, or rather suggestion, concerning Addison. I both love and admire Addison, and deem him inimitable in his own kind of excellence, and that a very high one. But it has *done its* work,—nay, more, it has gone beyond it, and produced a passion for the unconnected in the minds of Englishmen. But for myself I say, (1) The plan of *The Friend* is such as I can do best, (2) Many can write popularly far better than I can, (3) These are awful times! and though there is some good done by every additional source of innocent pleasure, yet at present any knowledge which leaves men ignorant of their ignorance tends to increase that ignorance.—With most respectful remembrances to Sir George, I remain, dear Madam, your Ladyship's grateful and affectionate friend,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Miss W. has received the one-half of the ten-pound note, for which your Ladyship will please to accept my acknowledgments.

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH to LADY BEAUMONT.

February 28th.[1]

My dear Friend,— * * * * * * * * * The children, each in a different way, are thriving, happy, and interesting creatures. John is bold and active, and gives daily proofs of a gracious and gentle dispostion. Dorothy is a delightful girl—clever, entertaining, and lively,—indeed so very lively that it is impossible for her not to satisfy the activity of her spirit with a little naughtiness at times—a waywardness of fancy rather than of temper. Thomas continues to be the most innocent of babies, a baby all over—in simplicity, in helplessness, in his fond love of those persons whom he has had about him, and in the guileless expression of his pretty face. Yet his eyes express *more* than innocence: there is a rich mildness in them, a kind of liquid softness which is most bewitching—they ought to have been the eyes of a female. His little sister Catharine is a perfect contrast, *to him* especially; but she is the

only funny child in the family; the rest of the children are *lively*, but Catharine is comical in every look and motion. Thomas perpetually forces a tender smile by his simplicity, and Catharine makes you laugh outright, though she can hardly say half-a-dozen words, and she joins in the laugh, as if sensible of the drollery of her appearance. She is a plain child, has something peculiar in the cast of her face, which probably adds to the comic effect of her looks and gestures. Miss Hutchinson does really intend to leave us in about a fortnight. Mr. Monkhouse, her brother's partner in the farming concern in Wales, is here, and she is unwilling to let slip the opportunity of accompanying him when he returns. We shall find a great loss in her, as she has been with us more than four years; but Coleridge most of all will miss her, as she has transcribed almost every paper of *The Friend* for the press. You will be glad to hear that her health is, upon the whole, very good, though she is incapable of much bodily exertion. Mr. Monkhouse has been under the surgeon's hands ever since his arrival at Grasmere, about a fortnight ago. His horse struck him when he was driving him along at about the distance of a

mile from our house. Fortunately some men saw him fall, otherwise, as the evening was cold and the daylight gone, the consequences might have been dreadful. He lay in a swoon some time, but at last by the assistance of the men he managed to walk to Allan Bank. He is however doing very well, and the apothecary says that he may travel safely in the course of a fortnight. With Mr. Monkhouse we have also another gentleman from Wales; Mr. Wilson also has been staying with us. These circumstances will partly account to you for my having been more than usually engaged in domestic employments. To which I may add another reason, that my sister, though in good health, is not able to go through much fatigue, and also that her chief employment of late has been transcribing for William.

Coleridge's spirits have been irregular of late. He was damped after the 20th number by the slow arrival of payments, and half persuaded himself that he ought not to go on. We laboured hard against such a resolve, and he seems determined to fight onwards; and indeed I do not think he had ever much reason to be discouraged, or *would have been* discouraged if

his spirits had not before been damped; for there have been many untoward circumstances and much mismanagement to hinder the regular remittance of the money, and many people have not yet paid, merely from thoughtlessness, who, no doubt, will pay ere long; and the work cannot but answer in a pecuniary point of view, if there is not in the end a very great failure in the payments. By the great quantity of labour that he has performed since the commencement of *The Friend* you will judge that he has upon the whole been very industrious; and you will hardly believe me when I tell you that there have been weeks and weeks when he has not composed a line. The fact is that he either does a great deal or nothing at all; and that he composes with a rapidity truly astonishing, if one did not reflect upon the large stores of thought which he has laid up, and the quantity of knowledge which he is continually gaining from books. Add to this his habit of expressing his ideas in conversation in elegant language. He has written a whole *Friend* more than once in two days. They are never re-transcribed, and he generally has dictated to Miss Hutchinson, who takes the words down from his mouth. We

truly rejoice in the satisfaction which *The Friend* has spread around your fireside, and there are many solitary individuals who have been proud to express their thankfulness to the author. How have you liked the *Epitaphs from Chiabrera?* The essay of this week (No. 25) is by my brother. He did not intend it to be published now; but Coleridge was in such bad spirits that when the time came he was utterly unprovided, and besides had been put out of his regular course by waiting for books to consult respecting Duty; so my brother's essay, being ready, was sent off. William requested Coleridge to proffer an apology for the breach of his promise; but he was, I believe, too languid even to make this exertion, and I fear that people would be disappointed, having framed their expectations for the conclusion of Sir Alexander's history; and here I must observe that we have often cautioned Coleridge against making promises, which even if performed are of no service, and if broken must be of great dis-service.

My brother's essay (as indeed most of the essays) is sadly misprinted. One or two of the chief mistakes you will perhaps take the trouble to correct, as they render it unintelligible. For

'Nestrian' in the Epitaph read 'Nestorian.' Page 406, after 'pious duty' place a full stop, and read, 'And with regard to this latter.' Page 407, after 'recurring to this twofold desire,' add, 'namely, to guard the remains of the deceased, and to preserve their memory, which has been deduced from the higher feeling, the consciousness of immortality, it may be said,' etc. Page 408, for 'an ingenious poet,' read '*ingenuous* poet.' My brother has written two more essays on the same subject, which will appear when there is need. He is deeply engaged in composition. Before he turns to any other labour, I hope he will have finished three books of *The Recluse*. He seldom writes less than fifty lines every day. After this task is finished he hopes to complete the *White Doe*, and proud should we all be if it could be honoured by a frontispiece from the pencil of Sir George Beaumont. Perhaps this is not impossible if you come into the north next summer, and Sir George hinted at such an intention. If you should not come, we indulge the hope of seeing you at Coleorton. Do excuse this scrawl. I wish I had taken a larger sheet of paper, for I feel as if I had yet a great deal to say to you. I am glad you are

interested with my brother Christopher's work.[2] I am very much pleased with it. The lives of Sir Thomas More and Cardinal Wolsey are most exceedingly interesting. My brother and sister beg to be affectionately remembered to Mrs. Fermor; and may I present my best respects to her, though I have not the happiness of knowing her personally? Adieu, my dear Lady Beaumont.—Believe me, your grateful and affectionate friend, D. WORDSWORTH.

Coleridge bids me say he has received your letter, and has begun to write to Sir George several days ago. I am ashamed of this letter on looking it over. Can you read it?

[1] Written at Allan Bank. The postmark is March 5, 1810.—ED.

[2] His *Ecclesiastical Biography*.—ED.

WORDSWORTH and DOROTHY WORDSWORTH to LADY BEAUMONT.

Grasmere, May 10th.[1]

My dear Lady Beaumont,—I am very happy that you have read the Introduction[2] with so much pleasure, and must thank you for your kindness in telling me of it. I thought the part about the cottages well done; and also liked a sentence where I transport the reader to the top of one of the mountains, or rather, to the cloud chosen for his station, and give a sketch of the impressions which the country might be supposed to make on a feeling mind contemplating its appearance before it was inhabited. But what I wished to accomplish was to give a model of the manner in which topographical descriptions ought to be executed, in order to their being either useful or intelligible, by evolving truly and distinctly one appearance from another. In this I think I have not wholly failed.

I shall prepare for coming to Coleorton as soon after your arrival as it will be grateful to you to be interrupted. I wish to have the summer by the forelock. Mrs. W. expects her little one every day; and should all go on well, and Catharine continue to advance as she has done, within six weeks from this time my sister, I hope, will also be at liberty, and we may take our departure together.

I assure you I long much to see you and Sir George, and the place also, not a little. I feel also that I stand in need of some change; I cannot say that I am unwell, but I am not so strong as I have been. This I am sure of, though those about me will not hear of it, and I am not sorry that they will not.

The drawings, or etchings, or whatever they may be called, are, I know, such as to you and Sir George must be intolerable. You will receive from them that sort of disgust which I do from bad poetry, a disgust which can never be felt in its full strength but by those who are practised in an art, as well as amateurs of it. I took Sir George's subscription as a kindness done to myself; and Wilkinson, though not superabundant in good sense, told me that he

saw it in that light. I do however sincerely hope that the author and his wife (who certainly, notwithstanding her faults and foibles, is no ordinary woman) may be spared any mortification from hearing them condemned severely by acknowledged judges. They will please many who in all the arts are most taken with what is most worthless. I do not mean that there is not in simple and unadulterated minds a sense of the beautiful and sublime in art; but into the hands of few such do prints or pictures fall.

Be so good, my dear Lady Beaumont, as to tell Sir George that I should have written to him long ago; but too much love, combined with a good deal of sadness, has kept me silent. I could not write without opening my heart; and that would have led to painful subjects, which, knowing his state of health and spirits, I thought it better to avoid. But I hope we shall soon meet, and such of these things as it is proper to say may then be said at a less price than when friends are separated. — I remain, your very affectionate friend, W. WORDSWORTH.

P.S.—You said that Mr. Canning could not deny that I had spoken with the bone of truth. The misfortune is, with persons in Mr. Canning's situation, it is impossible to know when *they* speak with *sincerity.* But this I am assured of, that the events which have since taken place prove that I had at least some portion of the gift of prescience. In fact, everything that has been done in Spain, right or wrong, is a comment upon the principles I have laid down.

W. W.

I cannot help adding a few words.

* * * * *

You will be rejoiced to hear that we shall *not* be forced to leave Grasmere Vale. We are to have the parsonage-house, which will be made a very comfortable dwelling before we enter upon it, which will be next year at this time. But oh ! my dear friend, this place—the wood behind it and the rocks, the view of Easedale from them, the lake, and church, and village on the other side—is sweeter than paradise itself. For these two days we have again had sunshine, with westerly breezes.

* * * * *

Adieu! God bless you, my dear friend.

D. W.

[1] Postmark, May 16, 1810.—ED.

[2] The Introduction to the Rev. Joseph Wilkinson's *Select Views in Cumberland, Westmoreland, and Lancashire*, published in 1810 (12 numbers in one volume, folio). Wordsworth wrote this Introduction, which was afterwards expanded into his *Description of the Scenery of the Lakes in the North of England*.—ED.

WORDSWORTH to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.[1]

My dear Sir George,—When my last letter was gone I was much mortified. I seemed to myself a thankless spirit, having said so much of the different view we had taken of my perplexity, and little or nothing of your goodness in writing, giving yourself so much trouble about the business. But let us dismiss it. Whether I have done right or no I know not, but I acted to the best of my judgment. I like your ancestor's verses the more, the more I see of them; they are manly, dignified, and extremely harmonious. I do not remember in any author of that age such a series of well-tuned couplets.

The picture of the Thorn has been ten days under our roof; it has pleased greatly; and the more looked at, the more it pleases. Yet we have two objections to it: one, that the upright bough in the thorn is, we think, too tall for a tree in so exposed a situation, and the other, which I remember you mentioned as having been made by somebody in town, that the woman appears too

old. I did not feel this much myself, but both my wife and sister have felt it. The picture is, I think, beautifully coloured; and assuredly if it be the best praise of a picture that it should be often looked at, that praise yours has in abundant measure, and is likely to have. Our servant (observe, she is a Quaker by birth and breeding) thought that the colours were too grave. Our old Molly, of whom you have heard, did not venture to give her opinion in our presence, but as we learned afterwards, she laid her head close to a neighbour's of ours, whispering, 'What do ye think of it?' 'To be sure, the frame 's varra bonny, but, for my part, I can mak nowt on 't,' (meaning 'nothing of it'). To which her neighbour replied that she thought it was very natural. She was well acquainted with the poem, and said that the thorn in the picture was as like a thorn as it could stare, but that upon a high place the boughs never grew so high as the middle bough. This confirmed in me the belief that our objection, which she had not heard, was well founded.

What shall I say of Coleridge? or what can I say? My dear friend, this is certain, that he is destined to be unhappy. I would not distress

you and Lady Beaumont with this, but it is not to be kept from you, and ought not, loving him and us as you do. I believe I have spoken to Lady Beaumont of his domestic situation, so that the little which I shall now say will not be altogether new, and therefore will, I hope, be less felt. In fact, he dare not go home, he recoils so much from the thought of domesticating with Mrs. C., with whom, though on many accounts he much respects her, he is so miserable that he dare not encounter it. What a deplorable thing! I have written to him to say that if he does not come down immediately I must insist upon seeing him somewhere. If he appoints London, I shall go. I believe if anything good is to be done for him, it must be done by me. I will say no more of this at present, only be assured if we have not written to you this is the cause. He has no plan for his own residence, and as yet has taken no notice of anything we have said of our movements depending upon him and his.

[1] This letter is undated and unfinished. It was probably written in the year 1811.—ED.

COLERIDGE to LADY BEAUMONT.

March 16, 1811.

I have left your ladyship the two first parts of the biographical or philosophico-biographical poem to be prefixed or annexed to *The Recluse*: your ladyship may perhaps wish to *look* them over. When I gave your ladyship Davy's letter to me, I *trust* that I need not say how wholly my consciousness was taken up with Davy, and with the letter, as a proof of his tenderness and seriousness of mind. Of the subject of his letter I thought as little as of the man in the moon, the sentiments expressed concerning me are so very wide from the habitual thoughts of my own mind and heart. In simple truth, I have long laid the whole affair to sleep, having repeatedly and *solemnly* assured both Davy and Wordsworth that I knew myself better than they could: and that I *knew* that they had grossly overrated me. I would I could think otherwise. Though an error, yet, being joyous and *stimulant*, it might do me great good; and I should have wit enough to keep it to myself.

Yet after I had given you the letter, the indelicacy of the *semblance* of the thing struck and pained me, though I in the next moment blamed myself for the feeling: for 'if I suppose Sir George and Lady Beaumont to know so little of my heart and habits of feeling as the fear implies, how dare I imagine that I know them, and what would become of all the emotions and feelings that hang upon that supposed knowledge?'

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Monday morning, March 25, 1811.

Shall I request your ladyship to be so good as to let one of the servants take the accompanying letter to Mr. Davy?

SOUTHEY to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Keswick, March 28, 1811.

My dear Sir,—The more necessary it becomes for Coleridge to exert himself in providing means for meeting the growing demands of his children, the more incapable, by some strange and fatal infirmity, does he become of exertion. Knowing his prodigious powers, and that there is no bodily disease which incapacitates him, so that the mere effort of his own will would at any moment render him all that his friends and family wish him to be, it is impossible not to feel a hope that that effort will one day be made; yet this is hoping for an intellectual and moral conversion, a new birth produced by an operation of grace, of which there is no example to encourage us to hope for it.

Wordsworth passed a few days with me lately. The enclosure of Skiddaw is likely to put him in possession of the eastern side of Applethwaite glen. We walked up it together in the character

of surveyors, planning walks and plantations, and wishing it were but as easy to build houses as castles. You must come to Keswick this summer if you ever wish to see Skiddaw again in his majesty. The surface will soon be scored with enclosures, and stuck over with larches. I cannot however but approve of the enclosure, and my consolation is that if I live to go up the mountain twenty years hence, it will be a comfort to rest in the shade upon the way.

I expected to have been in London at this time, but business which admits of no delay has grown under my hands, and it will be impossible for me to leave this place before the first or second week in May, just when I should be wishing to come back to it. My headquarters will not be in town, as usual, but at Streatham, where my uncle has lately settled as rector. My goings on here are something like those of a horse in a mill for labour and regularity—I may add too, for quietness and content. I have made some little progress in a blank verse poem, of which Pelayo, the restorer of Spain, is the hero; and I am planning another, which you will think more original in conception when you hear that the scene lies in New England, that the subject

is that war which ensured the superiority of the English settlers over the original inhabitants, and that the chief personage is a primitive Quaker. His abominable costume would be less manageable in your art than in mine.

That sweet island of Col. Peachy's,[1] I think, will be to be sold. If you should think of visiting us this summer it might not improbably be procured for the season. Mrs. Peachy was a great loss to us. I had a sincere regard for her, which struck the deeper root because I always looked upon her as one who bore about in her the seeds of a mortal malady. Having lost her, this lake will never again be to me what it has been, and yet I have felt more pain in beholding her in her most cheerful moments than when I heard the tidings of her death.

Mrs. S. and her sisters join me in respects to Lady Beaumont.—Believe me, Sir George, very truly and respectfully yours,

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

[1] Derwent Isle, at the northern end of Derwentwater, opposite Friar's Crag.—ED.

WORDSWORTH to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

August 28, 1811.
Cottage 7 minutes' walk from the sea-side, near Bootle, Cumberland.

My dear Sir George,—How shall I appear before you again after so long an interval? It seems that now I ought rather to begin with an apology for writing, than for not having written during a space of almost twelve months. I have blamed myself not a little; yet not so much as I should have done had I not known that the main cause of my silence has been the affection I feel for you, on which account it is not so easy to me to write upon trifling or daily occurrences to you as it would be to write to another whom I loved less. Accordingly these have not had power to tempt me to take up the pen; and in the meantime from my more intimate concerns I have abstained, partly because I do not in many cases myself like to see the reflection of these upon paper, and still more, because it is my wish at all times, when I think of the state in which your

health and spirits may happen to be, that my letters should be wholly free from melancholy, and breathe nothing but cheerfulness and pleasure. Having made this avowal, I trust that what may be wanting to my justification will be made up by your kindness and forgiving disposition.

It was near about this time last year that we were employed in our pleasant tour to the Leasowes and Hagley. The twelve months that have elapsed have not impaired the impressions which those scenes made upon me, nor weakened my remembrance of the delight which the places and objects, and the conversations they led to, awakened in our minds. You perhaps will recollect that I mentioned in a letter a fine grove, or rather wood, of yew-trees at Hagley which we missed. I have since learned that there is in the village, in the possession of a gentleman whose name I have forgotten, a picture of exquisite beauty. My story is a large one, for I do not know what is the subject of the piece, nor whether it is by Rubens, or some Italian master. Mr. Sattesthwaite, rector of the parish of Bootle, where this is written, is my authority. Lady Beaumont well remembers to have met Mr. S. at

Lord Lonsdale's; he has seen the picture, and, without affecting to be a judge, speaks of it in the highest terms. He adds that the owner is himself a great curiosity, in particular for his passionate attachment to the art of painting; not that he follows it himself, but as an amateur. Mr. S. was particularly struck with one proof that he gave of his enthusiasm. It was about the height of the French Revolution when S—— visited him. He talked of a nephew of his, then abroad, and mentioned, with infinite satisfaction, the opportunity which the distracted state of the Continent would give him to pick up a picture of first-rate excellence. In fact, says S——, it was plain from the good gentleman's words and looks and manner that the French Revolution, with all its overthrow of Governments and desolation of countries, was by him looked upon as a happy event, inasmuch as it afforded the enterprising and the judicious an opportunity of laying hold of some inestimable work of art, which would otherwise have been unattainable, and have been locked up in a foreign convent or palace till the canvas or tablet on which it was wrought mouldered, or its colours faded away. Under this aspect only did our connoisseur contemplate those awful

acts of Providence in which the French nation have been the chief instruments, for the chastisement, instruction, and animation of mankind. Thanks to the surrounding ocean with which this favoured land is guarded, and to our own excellent institutions and native valour, this innocent enthusiast of Hagley is still able to draw the green silk curtain from his single treasure when he likes, and congratulate himself upon his lot in possessing it. Happy England! where security allows such a multitude leisure to indulge in dreams as harmless (each after his own fashion), and where national independence and civil liberty allow, or rather encourage, so many diverse humours in man, and mould individual character into such a variety of shapes. The person who has led me to rhapsodise in this way was not a collector, nor wished his travelling nephew to become so. "A single piece," said he, "is enough, provided it be of a noble kind, and perfect in itself." He deemed himself the lord and owner of a star of the first magnitude, and provided his nephew should prove as fortunate, he did not seem to care what became of the inferior orbs; his family would then be set up for ever. I have been very prolix upon the subject of this old gentleman, and

should not have mentioned him at all had it not been clear that in so small a village as Hagley he and his picture may be easily found, and Fortune perhaps may draw you thither at some time or other, though I well know that you are not a *pushing man*, and therefore all my information may be thrown away.

It is very late to mention that when in Wales last autumn I contrived to pass a day and a half with your friend Price at Foxley. He was very kind, and took due pains to show me all the beauties of his place. I should have been very insensible not to be pleased with, and grateful for, his attentions; and certainly I was gratified by the sight of the scenes through which he conducted me. But to you I will say that, upon the whole, I was not in a kindly or genial state of mind while Mr. Price was taking so much friendly pains for my entertainment. His daughter put me out of tune by her strange speech, looks, and manners; and then, unluckily, Fitzpatrick was there, a torch that once may have burnt bright, but is now deplorably dim. It was to me odd to see a host and a guest who appeared to have so little satisfaction in each other's company, and full as odd to see a *hostess* and a guest so snugly and

peaceably content with each other. But this looks like scandal, which is bad enough from the lip, but in a letter is intolerable. These things deranged me, and thereupon I was less able to do justice in my own mind to the scenery of Foxley. You will perhaps think it is a strange fault that I am going to find with it, considering the acknowledged taste of the owner, viz. that, small as it is compared with hundreds of places, the domain is too extensive for the character of the country. Wanting both rock and water, it necessarily wants variety, and in a district of this kind the portion of a gentleman's estate which he keeps exclusively to himself, and which he devotes wholly or in part to ornament, may very easily exceed the proper bounds, not indeed as to the preservation of wood, but most easily as to everything else. A man by little and little becomes so delicate and fastidious with respect to forms in scenery, where he has a power to exercise a control over them, that if they do not exactly please him in all moods, and every point of view, his power becomes his law. He banishes one, and then rids himself of another, impoverishing and *monotonising* landscapes, which, if not originally distinguished by the bounty of Nature,

must be ill able to spare the inspiriting varieties which Art, and the occupations and wants of life, in a country left more to itself never fail to produce. This relish of humanity Foxley wants, and is therefore to me, in spite of all its recommendations, a melancholy spot,—I mean that part of it which the owner keeps to himself, and has taken so much pains with.

I heard the other day of two artists who thus expressed themselves upon the subject of a scene among our lakes: 'Plague upon those vile enclosures!' said one; 'they spoil everything.' 'Oh,' said the other, 'I never *see* them.' Glover was the name of this last. Now, for my part, I should not wish to be either of these gentlemen, but to have in my own mind the power of turning to advantage, wherever it is possible, every object of Art and Nature as they appear before me. What a noble instance, as you have often pointed out to me, has Rubens given of this in that picture in your possession, where he has brought, as it were, a whole county into one landscape, and made the most formal partitions of cultivation, hedge-rows of pollard willows, conduct the eye into the depths and distances of his picture; and thus, more than by any other means, has given

it that appearance of immensity which is so striking!

As I have slipped into the subject of painting, I feel anxious to inquire whether your pencil has been busy last winter in the solitude and uninterrupted quiet of Dunmow. Most likely you know that we have changed our residence in Grasmere, which, I hope, will be attended with a great overbalance of advantages. One we are certain of—that we have at least one sitting-room clear of smoke, I trust, in all winds. It is a very small parlour, and in the winter will be exclusively my own. Over the chimney-piece is hung your little picture, from the neighbourhood of Coleorton. In our other house, on account of the frequent fits of smoke from the chimneys, both the pictures which I have from your hand were confined to bedrooms. A few days after I had enjoyed the pleasure of seeing, in different moods of mind, your Coleorton landscape from my fireside, it *suggested* to me the following sonnet, which, having walked out to the side of Grasmere brook, where it murmurs through the meadows near the church, I composed immediately:—

Praised be the Art whose subtle power could stay
Yon cloud, and fix it in that glorious shape;
Nor would permit the thin smoke to escape,
Nor those bright sunbeams to forsake the day;
Which stopped that band of travellers on their way,
Ere they were lost within the shady wood;
And showed the bark upon the glassy flood
For ever anchored in her sheltering bay.
Soul-soothing Art! which morning, noontide, even,
Do serve, with all their changeful pageantry;
Thou, by ambition modest yet sublime,
Here, for the sight of mortal men, hast given
To one brief moment caught from fleeting time
The appropriate calm of blest Eternity!

The images of the smoke and the travellers are taken from your picture; the rest were added, in order to place the thought in a clear point of view, and for the sake of variety. I hope Coleorton continues to improve upon you and Lady Beaumont; and that Mr. Taylor's new laws and regulations are at least *peaceably* submitted to.

Mrs. W. and I return in a few days to Grasmere. We cannot say that the child, for whose sake we came down to the sea-side, has derived much benefit from the bathing. The weather has been very unfavourable: we have, however, contrived to see everything that lies within a reasonable walk of our present residence; among other places, Muncaster,—at least as much of it as can

be seen from the public road; but the noble proprietor has contrived to shut himself up so with plantations and chained gates and locks, that whatever prospects he may command from his stately prison, or rather fortification, can only be guessed at by the passing traveller. In the state of blindness and unprofitable peeping in which we were compelled to pursue our way up a long and steep hill, I could not help observing to my companion that the Hibernian peer had completely given the lie to the poet Thomson, when, in a strain of profound enthusiasm, he boasts—

> 'I care not, Fortune, what you me deny:
> You cannot rob me of free Nature's grace;
> You cannot shut the windows of the sky,
> Through which Aurora shows her brightening face;
> You cannot bar my constant feet to trace
> The woods and lawns by living stream,' etc.[1]

The *windows of the sky* were not *shut*, indeed, but the business was done more thoroughly; for the sky was nearly shut out altogether. This is, like most others, a bleak and treeless coast, but abounding in corn-fields, and with a noble beach, which is delightful either for walking or riding. The Isle of Man is right opposite our window;[2] and though in this unsettled weather often invisible, its appearance has afforded us

great amusement. One afternoon above the whole length of it was stretched a body of clouds, shaped and coloured like a magnificent grove in winter, whitened with snow, and illuminated by the morning sun, which—having melted the snow in part—intermingled black masses among the brightness. The whole sky was scattered over with fleecy dark clouds, such as any sunshiny day produces, and which were changing their shapes and position every moment. But this line of clouds immovably attached themselves to the island, and manifestly took their shape from the influence of its mountains. There appeared to be just span enough of sky to allow the hand to slide between the top of Snâfell, the highest peak in the island, and the base of this glorious forest, in which little change was noticeable for more than the space of half an hour. We had another fine sight one evening, walking along a rising ground about two miles distant from the shore. It was about the hour of sunset, and the sea was perfectly calm; and in a quarter where its surface was indistinguishable from the western sky, hazy and luminous with the setting sun, appeared a tall sloop-rigged vessel, magnified by the atmosphere through which it was viewed,

and seeming rather to hang in the air than to float upon the waters. Milton compares the appearance of Satan to a *fleet* descried far off at sea. The visionary grandeur and beautiful form of this *single* vessel, could words have conveyed to the mind the picture which Nature presented to the eye, would have suited his purpose as well as the largest company of vessels that ever associated together, with the help of a trade wind, in the wide ocean. Yet not exactly so, and for this reason, that his image is a permanent one, not dependent upon accident.

I have not left myself room to assure you how sincerely I remain your affectionate friend,

W. WORDSWORTH.

[1] *The Castle of Indolence.*—Canto II. 3.—ED.

[2] 'Mona from our abode is daily seen.'—*Epistle to Sir George Beaumont.*—ED.

SOUTHEY to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Keswick, Sept. 28, 1811.

My dear Sir,—It was no little mortification to me on my arrival in town to learn that you had left it, though indeed, from the long delay of my journey, it was reasonable to expect that this would be the case. Had I however been certain of this, and received your friendly invitation before my departure from home, it would have been easy for us to have seen you at Coleorton,—a pleasure which on our return was not within our reach. On the way up we were so near as Nottingham, where we passed two or three days. Our way home was by Llanthony Abbey, Ludlow, Llangedwyn, and Llangollen, where we passed a day very pleasantly with the ladies.

Coleridge was the last person whom I saw in the neighbourhood of London. He told me at parting that he should be at Keswick before me. Here, however, I am, and there are no tidings of Coleridge. I found him in better

health than usūal, and, better still, in better habits; and while I see him so well employed as he has lately been in the *Courier*, I shall not urge him to leave town. Well employed must be said rather in reference to his no-employment than to the manner in which such talents ought to be directed. The way in which they would be most beneficial would be if he held a confidential situation with some man in power, either at home or abroad. I do not know that man in the world whose wisdom would then appear so practical.

I have been fortunate enough at last to obtain my brother's promotion to the rank of commander. It was done for me in a very flattering manner by Mr. Percival, through the intervention of his late secretary, Mr. Herries, at present Commissary-General, a very able as well as excellent man, with whom I have been acquainted many years. The promotion, which it has given me the greatest pleasure to have obtained, I mention because I feel assured, from the kindness with which you formerly endeavoured to obtain it for me, that you will rejoice to hear we have now been more successful.

My literary concerns, though upon the whole

more prosperous than they have heretofore been, afford a curious proof of the humour of the times. I am best paid for what is worth least; and if I consulted merely my own interest, should leave nothing for posterity, but employ myself wholly in writing such desultory essays as come within the limits of a review, and therefore do not trespass too much upon the leisure of a modern reader. For the last two years my chief and indeed favourite employment has been writing the annals of these most interesting times for the *Edinburgh Annual Register*. Those of 1809 happen to exceed those of the preceding year considerably in bulk, because the events are far more numerous. Nevertheless the public, who were well pleased with the length of the first volume, complain grievously because the second is longer, and the booksellers represent this to me as a serious evil. It is needless to say that, should the work continue, these representations will have no effect whatever upon me. In a history of this kind it is the business of the annalist not so much to regard the amusement of his own age as the information of those who are to come after him.

I am advancing with a poem in blank verse,

which I wish were finished, because its whole spirit is applicable to the present state of Spain, and it might have some effect in making others feel as I do upon that subject.

Mrs. Southey and her sisters join with me in respects to Lady Beaumont.—Believe me, my dear sir, truly and respectfully yours,

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

WORDSWORTH to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

[1811.][1]

My dear Sir George,—Had there been room at the end of the small avenue of lime-trees for planting a spacious circle of the same trees, the urn might have been placed in the centre, with the inscription thus altered:

Ye lime-trees, ranged around this hallowed urn,
Shoot forth with lively power at Spring's return!

* * * * *

Here may some painter sit in future days,
Some future poet meditate his lays!
Not mindless of that distant age, renowned,
When inspiration hovered o'er this ground,
The haunt of him who sang, how spear and shield
In civil conflict met on Bosworth field,
And of that famous youth (full soon removed
From earth!) by mighty Shakespear's self approved,
Fletcher's associate, Jonson's friend beloved.

The first couplet of the above, as it before stood, would have appeared ludicrous, if the stone had remained after the tree might have been gone. The couplet relating to the household virtues did not accord with the painter and

the poet; the former being allegorical figures; the latter, living men.

What follows I composed yesterday morning, thinking there might be no impropriety in placing it so as to be *visible only to a person sitting within the niche*, which we hollowed out of the sandstone in the winter garden. I am told that this is, in the present form of the niche, impossible; but I shall be most ready, when I come to Coleorton, to scoop out a place for it, if Lady Beaumont thinks it worth while.

INSCRIPTION.

Oft is the medal faithful to its trust
When temples, columns, towers, are laid in dust;
And 'tis a common ordinance of fate
That things obscure and small outlive the great.
Hence, etc.

These inscriptions have all one fault, they are too long; but I was unable to do justice to the thoughts in less room. The second has brought Sir John Beaumont and his brother Francis so lively to my mind, that I recur to the plan of republishing the former's poems, perhaps in connection with those of Francis. Could any further *search* be made after the *Crown of Thorns*? If I recollect right, Southey applied without effect to

the numerous friends he has among the collectors. The best way, perhaps, of managing this republication would be, to print it in a very elegant type and paper, and not many copies, to be sold high, so that it might be prized by the collectors as a curiosity. Bearing in mind how many excellent things there are in Sir John Beaumont's little volume, I am somewhat mortified at this mode of honouring his memory; but in the present state of the taste of this country, I cannot flatter myself that poems of that character would win their way into general circulation. Should it appear advisable, another edition might afterwards be published, upon a plan which would place the book within the reach of those who have little money to spare.—I remain, my dear Sir George, your affectionate friend,

W. WORDSWORTH.

[1] No date is given, but the letter was evidently written from Grasmere, and probably preceded the one which bears the date Nov. 16, 1811.—ED.

WORDSWORTH to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.[1]

Grasmere, Sat., Nov. 16, 1811.

My dear Sir George,—I have to thank you for two letters. Lady Beaumont also will accept my acknowledgments for the interesting letter with which she favoured me.

* * * * *

I learn from Mrs. Coleridge, who has lately heard from C., that Allston the painter has arrived in London. Coleridge speaks of him as a most interesting person. He has brought with him a few pictures from his own pencil, among others, a Cupid and Psyche, which, in C.'s opinion, has not, for colouring, been surpassed since Titian. C. is about to deliver a Course of Lectures upon Poetry at some Institution in the City. He is well, and I learn that *The Friend* has been a good deal inquired after lately. For ourselves, we never hear from him.

I am glad that the inscriptions please you.

It did always appear to me, that inscriptions, particularly those in verse, or in a dead language, were never supposed *necessarily* to be the composition of those in whose name they appeared. If a more striking, or more dramatic effect could be produced, I have always thought, that in an epitaph or memorial of any kind, a father, or husband, etc., might be introduced, speaking, without any absolute deception being intended: that is, the reader is understood to be at liberty to say to himself,—these verses, or this Latin, may be the composition of some unknown person, and not that of the father, widow, or friend, from whose hand or voice they profess to proceed. If the composition be natural, affecting, or beautiful, it is all that is required. This, at least, was my view of the subject, or I should not have adopted that mode. However, in respect to your scruples, which I feel are both delicate and reasonable, I have altered the verses; and I have only to regret that the alteration is not more happily done. But I never found anything more difficult. I wished to preserve the expression *patrimonial grounds*, but I found this impossible, on account of the awkwardness of the pronouns, *he* and *his*, as

applied to Reynolds, and to yourself. This, even where it does not produce confusion, is always inelegant. I was therefore obliged to drop it; so that we must be content, I fear, with the inscription as it stands below. As you mention that the first copy was mislaid, I will transcribe the first part from that; but you can either choose the Dome or the Abbey as you like.

> Ye lime-trees, ranged before this hallowed urn,
> Shoot forth with lively power at Spring's return;
> And be not slow a stately growth to rear
> Of pillars, branching off from year to year,
> Till ye have framed, at length, a darksome aisle,
> Like a recess within that sacred pile
> Where Reynolds, 'mid our country's noblest dead,
> In the last sanctity of fame is laid, etc. etc.

I hope this will do: I tried a hundred different ways, but cannot hit upon anything better. I am sorry to learn from Lady Beaumont, that there is reason to believe that our cedar is already perished. I am sorry for it. The verses upon that subject you and Lady B. praise highly; and certainly, if they have merit, as I cannot but think they have, your discriminating praises have pointed it out. The alteration in the beginning, I think with you, is a great improvement, and the first line is, to my

ear, very rich and grateful. As to the 'Female and Male,' I know not how to get rid of it; for that circumstance gives the recess an appropriate interest. I remember Mr. Bowles the poet objected to the word 'ravishment' at the end of the sonnet to the winter garden; yet it has the authority of all the first-rate poets, for instance, Milton:

> In whose sight all things joy, with *ravishment*,
> Attracted by thy beauty still to gaze.

Objections upon these grounds merit more attention in regard to inscriptions than any other sort of composition; and on this account, the lines (I mean those upon the niche) had better be suppressed, for it is not improbable that the altering of them might cost me more trouble than writing a hundred fresh ones.

We were happy to hear that your mother, Lady Beaumont, was so surprisingly well. You do not mention the school at Coleorton. Pray how is Wilkie in health, and also as to progress in his art? I do not doubt that I shall like Arnold's picture; but he would have been a better painter, if his genius had led him to *read* more in the early part of his life. Wilkie's style of painting does not require that the mind should

be fed from books; but I do not think it possible to *excel* in *landscape* painting without a strong tincture of the poetic spirit.

[1] See *Memoirs*, vol. i. pp. 360-3.—ED.

WORDSWORTH to LADY BEAUMONT.

Grasmere, Wednesday, Nov. 20, 1811.

My dear Lady Beaumont,—When you see this you will think I mean to overrun you with inscriptions: I do not mean to tax you with putting them up, only with reading them. The following I composed yesterday morning, in a walk from Brathway, whither I had been to accompany my sister.

FOR A SEAT IN THE GROVES OF COLEORTON.

Beneath yon eastern ridge, the craggy bound
Rugged and high of Charnwood's forest-ground,
Stand yet, but, Stranger! hidden from thy view,
The ivied ruins of forlorn Grace Dieu, etc. etc.

I hope that neither you nor Sir George will think that the above takes from the effect of the mention of Francis Beaumont in the poem upon the cedar. Grace Dieu is itself so interesting a spot, and has naturally and historically such a connection with Coleorton, that I could not deny myself the pleasure of paying it this mark of attention. The thought of writing the inscription occurred to me many years ago. I took the

liberty of transcribing for Sir George an alteration which I had made in the inscription for St. Herbert's Island; I was not then quite satisfied with it; I have since retouched it, and will trouble you to read him the following, which I hope will give you pleasure:—

> This island, guarded from profane approach
> By mountains high and waters widely spread,
> Gave to St. Herbert a benign retreat, etc. etc.

I ought to mention, that the line,

> And things of holy use unhallowed lie,

is taken from the following of Daniel,

> Strait all that holy was unhallowed lies.

I will take this occasion of recommending to you (if you happen to have Daniel's poems) to read the epistle addressed to the Lady Margaret, Countess of Cumberland, beginning

> He that of such a height hath built his mind.

The whole poem is composed in a strain of meditative morality more dignified and affecting than anything of the kind I ever read. It is, besides, strikingly applicable to the revolutions of the present times.

My dear Lady Beaumont, your letter and the accounts it contains of the winter garden, gave

me great pleasure. I cannot but think, that under your care, it will grow up into one of the most beautiful and interesting spots in England. We all here have a longing desire to see it. I have mentioned the high opinion we have of it to a couple of my friends, persons of taste living in this country, who are determined, the first time they are called up to London, to turn aside to visit it; which I said they might without scruple do, if they mentioned my name to the gardener. My sister begs me to say, that she is aware how long she has been in your debt, and that she should have written before now, but that, as I have latterly been in frequent communication with Coleorton, she thought it as well to defer answering your letter.

Do you see *The Courier* newspaper at Dunmow? I ask on account of a little poem upon the comet, which I have read in it to-day. Though with several defects, and some feeble and constrained expressions, it has great merit, and is far superior to the run, not merely of newspaper, but of modern poetry in general. I half suspect it to be Coleridge's, for though it is, in parts, inferior to him, I know no other writer of the day who can do so well. It

consists of five stanzas, in the measure of the *Fairy Queen*. It is to be found in last Saturday's paper, November 16th. If you don't see *The Courier* we will transcribe it for you. As so much of this letter is taken up with my verses, I will e'en trespass still further on your indulgence, and conclude with a sonnet, which I wrote some time ago upon the poet, John Dyer. If you have not read *The Fleece*, I would strongly recommend it to you. The character of Dyer, as a patriot, a citizen, and a tender-hearted friend of humanity, was, in some respects, injurious to him as a poet, and has induced him to dwell, in his poem, upon processes which, however important in themselves, were unsusceptible of being poetically treated. Accordingly, his poem is, in several places, dry and heavy; but its beauties are innumerable, and of a high order. In point of *imagination* and purity of style, I am not sure that he is not superior to any writer in verse since the time of Milton.

SONNET.

Bard of the Fleece! whose skilful genius made
That work a living landscape fair and bright;
Nor hallowed less by musical delight
Than those soft scenes through which thy childhood strayed,
Those southern tracts of Cambria, deep embayed, etc. etc.

In the above is one whole line from *The Fleece*, and two other expressions. When you read *The Fleece* you will recognise them. — I remain, my dear Lady Beaumont, your sincere friend, W. WORDSWORTH.

COLERIDGE to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

F. T. Morgan's, Esqre.,
7 Portland Place, Hammersmith,
Saturday Morning, 7th December 1811.

Dear Sir George,—On Wednesday night I slept in town, in order to have a mask taken, from which, or rather with which, Allston means to model a bust of me. I did not, therefore, receive your letter and the enclosed till Thursday night, eleven o'clock, on my return from the lecture; and early on Friday morning I was roused from my first sleep by an agony of tooth-ache, which continued almost without intermission the whole day, and has left my head and the whole of my trunk, 'not a man but a bruise.' What can I say more, my dear Sir George, than that I deeply feel the proof of your continued friendship, and pray from my inmost soul that more perseverance in efforts of duty may render me more worthy of your kindness than I at pre-

sent am? Ingratitude, like all *crimes* that are at the same time *vices*—bad as malady, and worse as symptom,—is of so detestable a nature, that an honest man will mourn in silence under real injuries, than hazard the very suspicion of it, and will be slow to avail himself of Lord Bacon's remark (much as he may admire its profundity). 'Crimen ingrati animi, quod magnis ingeniis haud raro objicitur, saepius nil aliud est quam perspi cacia quaedam in causam beneficii collati.' Yet that man has assuredly tenfold reason to be grateful who can be so, both head and heart, who, at once served and honoured, knows himself more delighted by the motive that influenced his friend than by the benefit received by himself; were it only perhaps for this cause, that the consciousness of always repaying the former in kind takes away all regret that he is incapable of returning the latter.

Mr. Dawe, Royal Associate, who plastered my face for me, says that he never saw so excellent a mask, and so unaffected by any expression of pain or uneasiness. On Tuesday, at the furthest, a cast will be finished, which I was vain enough to desire to be packed up and sent to Dunmow. With it you will find a chalk drawing of my face,

which I think far more like than any former attempt, excepting Allston's full-length portrait of me, which, with all his casts, etc., two or three valuable works of the Venetian school, and his Jason,—almost finished, and on which he had employed eighteen months without intermission,—are lying at Leghorn, with no chance of procuring them. There will likewise be an epistolary Essay for Lady Beaumont on the subject of Religion in reference to my own faith: it was too long to send by the post.

Dawe is engaged on a picture (the figures about four feet) from my poem of Love—

> She leaned beside the armèd man,
> The statue of the armèd knight;
> She stood and listened to my harp
> Amid the lingering light.
> His dying words—but when I reached, etc.,
> All impulses of soul and sense, etc.

His sketch is very beautiful, and has more expression than I ever found in his former productions—excepting indeed his Imogen.

Allston is hard at work on a large Scripture piece,—the dead man recalled to life by touching the bones of the Prophet. He models every figure. Dawe, who was delighted with the Cupid and Psyche, seemed quite astonished at the facility

and exquisiteness with which Allston modelled. Canova, at Rome, expressed himself to me in very warm terms of admiration on the same subject. He means to exhibit but two, or at the most, three pictures, all poetical, or history-painting, in part by my advice. It seemed to me impolitic to appear to be *trying* in half a dozen ways, as if his mind had not yet discovered its main current. The longer I live, the more deeply am I convinced of the high importance, as a symptom, of the love of *beauty* in a young painter. It is neither honourable to a young man's heart or head to attach himself year after year to old or deformed objects, comparatively too so easy, especially if bad drawing and worse colouring leave the spectator's imagination at lawless liberty, and he cries out 'How very like!' just as he would at a coal in the centre of the fire, or at a frost-figure on a window-pane. It is on this, added to his quiet, unenvious spirit, to his lofty feelings concerning his art, and to the religious purity of his moral character, that I chiefly rest my hopes of Allston's future fame. His best productions seem to please him principally because he sees, and has learnt something which enables him to promise himself, 'I shall do better in my next.'

I have not been at *The Courier* office for some months past. I detest writing politics, even on the right side; and when I discovered that *The Courier* was not the independent paper I had been led to believe, and had myself over and over again asserted, I wrote no more for it. Greatly indeed do I prefer the present Ministers to the leaders of any other party, but indiscriminate support of any class of men I dare not give, especially when there is so easy and honourable an alternative as not to write politics at all, which henceforth nothing but blank necessity shall compel me to do. I will write for the PERMANENT, or not at all. *The Comet,* therefore, I have never seen, or heard of it, yet most true it is that I myself have composed some verses on the comet; but I am quite certain that no one ever saw them—for the best of all reasons, that my own brain is the only substance on which they have been recorded. I will, however, consign them to paper, and send them to you with *The Courier* poem, as soon as I can procure it, for the curiosity of the thing.

I write in some pain from the extreme soreness at the surface of my chest and stomach.—My most affectionate respects to Lady Beaumont,

and believe me, dear Sir George, with heartfelt regard, your obliged and grateful friend,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

P.S.—Were you in town, I should be very sorry indeed to see you in Fetter Lane. The lectures were meant for the young men of the City. Several of my friends join to take notes, and if I can correct what they can shape out of them into any tolerable form, I will send them to you. On Monday I lecture on Love and the Female Character as displayed by Shakespeare. Good Dr. Bell is in town. He came from Keswick, all delight with my little Sara, and quite enchanted with Southey. Some flights of admiration in the form of questions to me ('Did you ever see anything so finely conceived, so profoundly thought, as this passage in his review of the Methodists? or on the Education?' etc.) embarrassed me in a very ridiculous way; and I verily believe that my odd way of hesitating left on Bell's mind some shade of a suspicion as if I did not like to hear my friend so highly extolled. Half a dozen words from Southey would have precluded this, without diminution to his own fame,—I mean, in conversation with Dr. Bell.

COLERIDGE to SIR GEORGE and LADY BEAUMONT.

[*No date.*]

My dear and honoured Friends,—Having left this house, I shall have small heart to return hither merely to leave it again. It will not be easy for me to forget the sudden and impetuous transition of feeling which I experienced last night, when, having bade you good-night—almost our last words a mirthful story—I opened the second green door, and when I was at length left alone in my bedroom—oh dear and heart-honoured Sir George and Lady Beaumont! —I sat by the fire, a world of confused images of Keswick, Dunmow, London, passing before my very eyes, till the waters dropped from them, and the walls of the room brought me back to more serious, and deeper, oh far deeper, emotion. I knelt and prayed for you. May Almighty God preserve and bless you. If I did not in my heart's heart . . . feel toward you, dear Sir George and dear Lady Beaumont, even as though

> We had been rear'd upon the selfsame hills,
> Fed the same flocks by fountains, shades, and rills,

I should find in the consciousness of your affectionate and zealous esteem of me, a burthen which my spirit could not support. Wherever I am, and whatever, yet sick or well, on this or on the other side of the world of waters, yet be it my faith, that—alike on this or on the other side of the grave—I shall remain, dear friends, with gratitude, esteem, and with many affections blended in one, your friend,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

I have enclosed Taylor's letter. The fair woman's verses shall be sent to you.

SOUTHEY to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Keswick, May 29th, 1812.

My dear Sir,—I write to you with an especial ill grace, because having left undone that which I ought to have done, I have now to do that which of all things there is the most discomfort in doing.

M. Dutens, his Majesty's historiographer, is dead. This appointment I have long desired to hold. I am ambitious of the title, which would be honourable at home and useful abroad; and the salary would enable me while in health to make some provision for my family, and secure me a moderate competence in case of infirmities from which no man is secure. It is in the gift of the Lord Chamberlain. Mr. Perceval honoured me with his good opinion, and I have every reason to believe that I might have relied upon him, had he not been taken from us by this dreadful blow. God grant that it may not prove a fatal one to the best interests of Great Britain and of Europe. But I confess

that now for the first time I look forward almost without hope, so many and so imminent are the perils which surround us.

At any other time I should have been sure of Mr. Canning's good offices. It is now so little likely that he can have a minute to bestow upon me, that I shall send the letter I have written to him to his friend Gifford, to be delivered or thrown into the fire at his discretion. I have written also to Lord Lonsdale. The readiness with which he endeavoured to serve me on a former occasion, and the friendliness with which he would have urged his application, —if I had not discovered its unfitness,—made this as much a matter of due respect in the present case, as of self-interest. My friend Williams Wynn gave me the first information of the vacancy, and will omit no means within his reach. And when I have requested you to befriend me, if it be in your power so to do, I shall have no omission for which to reproach myself, in case the office should again be conferred upon a Frenchman, or any other person equally unfit.

It would be too much like castle-building to say with what pride and diligence I would dis-

charge the duties which ought to be annexed to the office. As much as possible I will now put it out of mind, and the state of affairs as well as my own occupations give me matter enough for thought.

You know that I am no desponding politician. My disposition is naturally as joyous as a sky-lark in spring. I have carried a boy's heart into middle age; and besides this unbroken cheerfulness, my philosophy and my faith teach me always to look on to the best. But I very much dread that we are on the brink of one of those ages of calamity, the good of which is not perceived till generations have passed by. The sinking down of Jacobinism into the lowest class, who have been prepared for it by the inevitable effects of the manufacturing system, is an evil of which I have long been aware, but its progress has been more rapid than I apprehended, and the whole extent of the danger now stares us in the face. Nothing but the army at this moment preserves us from a war of the poor against the rich, and God knows how long the army may be depended upon. The abuse of liberty has always been punished by the loss of liberty. Whether we shall see

ours endangered (at least) to prevent a civil war, or forfeited as the cost of one, seems to me the alternative which we have to apprehend. Of this I feel certain, that the present state of the press is sufficient to overthrow the Government, and must overthrow it, without some speedy remedy be applied.

If these will be averted, I am one of those persons who believe that the Church of England would be most seriously endangered by what is called Catholic Emancipation. To a Catholic Establishment in Ireland (the inevitable consequence) I could almost consent from utter hopelessness respecting that unhappy country; but in England, the downfall of the Church would prove fatal to the whole system upon which our prosperity has been built. I think I can even see the process by which it would be brought down. The State will want money. M. Wellesley will do as in India—carry on the war to a triumphant and decisive conclusion,—but he will be careless at what expense. The tithes offer a ready resource. The Catholic members (under the next Duke of Norfolk England will have many such), the Scotch philosophists, and the country gentlemen will joyfully combine against them;

and it would even be a popular measure to sell them, in which case Government funds the money, and the clergy become stipendiaries of the Crown. A very easy step then puts up the Establishment for sale to the lowest bidder, and the Methodists step in. England cannot be said to have recovered from the Reformation till William the Third's reign. That Reformation was not too dearly purchased. But by another religious revolution we can have nothing to gain, and have everything to lose. The more I contemplate this subject, the more I am convinced of our danger.

Make my respects to Lady Beaumont,—and believe me, my dear sir, yours with great respect,

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

Coleridge to Sir George Beaumont.

Thursday, 9th June 1814,
2 Queen's Square, Bristol.

Dear Sir George,—A forgotten exile, as I seem to be, from the love of those whom I most dearly loved, I am in doubt whether to deem it a palliative or an aggravation that I remain myself unaltered. My esteem and affections were in their good old age some ten years ago. What was, is; and, alas! old trees, they say, rarely permit new grafts on them. When however I turn from others to myself, I have abundant cause both for wonder and gratitude, that having been what I was, I am even as I am; though, but for the comparison, even this is sufficiently humiliating. 'Nihil e nihilo factus, tantum in hôc aliquid sum, quod *scio*, me nihil esse, sine Christo. Alii disputent! ego mirabor.'

Enough and more than enough of myself, which indeed, I should not have referred to at all, except as a sort of preface, for the avoiding of apparent abruptness. The sole subject of this

letter, and my only object, is the state of Mrs. Fermor's mental and bodily health. After having accorded with her wishes for a private interview with one of our most eloquent preachers in Bristol, which I the more readily did, because he is constitutionally a cheerful, and by study and reflection (some few recrements of Calvinism forgotten or forgiven) a rational and judicious man. I then, but not without difficulty, persuaded her to call in, and *once* at least to talk with my excellent friend Daniel, who truly is, and merits the high and honourable name of, a *medical chirurgeon, i.e.* a practical thinker, who combines hand with head, thinks in order that he may observe, observes constantly and steadily in order that he may have substantial materials to think on, and keeps alive the habit by facility of applying and realising the results of both. The sum-total of all intellectual excellence is good sense and method. When these have passed into the instinctive readiness of habit, when the wheel revolves so rapidly that we cannot see it revolve at all, then we call the combination Genius. But in all modes alike, and in all professions, the two sole component parts even of *Genius,* are Good Sense and Method.

Mrs. Fermor has seen him twice, and yester evening I had a long and detailed communication from him on the subject. I will dare confess, though at the risk of appearing arrogant, so fully had I made up my mind on the case, that I received satisfaction and confirmation, rather than any additional light, from the coincidence of my opinions with those of so quick-eyed and experienced a practitioner. It is perhaps one little symptom of the inherent nobleness of our human nature, that in all cases in which both mind and body are affected, we would still refer the *whole* effect to the *former*. Nay, if our misfortunes from without—death, or alienation (the moral death) of friends, or other incident calamities—will not suffice, we will often seek a cause even in imaginary *guilt*, rather than condescend to believe that the afflictions of our nobler being have their source in the mere disturbed functions of our bodily organs, which are not *we*, and scarcely *ours*. This I perceive daily in Mrs. Fermor. She clings to the belief of the exclusive *mental* origin of her complaint, as a limpet to the smooth rock, hardly removable, though by mere force of voluntary adhesion. 'Desunt retinacula: assugit tamen.' And doubt-

less whichever may have begun the affray, the other is sure to carry it on, and a cycle of reactions is the result. . . . I could almost pledge whatever is most dear to me, that she would (and though of course slowly, yet in a far shorter time than she now imagines possible) be restored to at least a comfortable state of mind and body, could she be induced to settle at Bristol for six or eight weeks, under the care of Daniel; and having at the same time, which at Bath she cannot have, something to look forward to as mental occupation, *lectures, preaching*, and rational evening conversation parties. I need not say that,—more needing to be cheered than in a mood to cheer others,—this advice is something more than disinterested on my part, except indeed that it is at all times our interest to feel and to realise gratitude. . . .

S. T. Coleridge.

COLERIDGE to LADY BEAUMONT.

3d April 1815.

Dear Madam,—Should your Ladyship still have among your papers those lines of mine to Mr. Wordsworth after his recitation of the poem on the growth of his own spirit, which you honoured by wishing to take a copy, you would oblige me by enclosing them for me, addressed 'Mr. Coleridge, Calne, Wilts.' Of *The Excursion*, including the tale of the ruined cottage, which I have ever thought the finest poem in our language, comparing it with any of the same or similar length, I can truly say that one half the number of its beauties would make all the beauties of all his contemporary poets collectively mount to the balance; but yet—the fault may be in my own mind. I do not think, I did not feel, it equal to the work on the growth of his own spirit.[1] As proofs meet me in every part of *The Excursion* that the poet's genius has not flagged, I have sometimes fancied that having, by the conjoint operation of his own experiences, feelings, and reason,

himself convinced *himself* of truths, which the generality of persons have either taken for granted from their infancy, or, at least, adopted in early life, he has attached all their own depth and weight to doctrines and words, which come almost as truisms or commonplace to others. From this state of mind, in which I was comparing Wordsworth with himself, I was roused by the infamous Edinburgh Review of the poem. If ever guilt lay on a writer's head, and if malignity, slander, hypocrisy, and self-contradictory baseness can constitute guilt, I dare openly, and openly (please God !) I will impeach the writer of that article of it. These are awful times—a dream of dreams ! To be a prophet is, and ever has been, an unthankful office. At the Illumination for the Peace I furnished a design for a friend's transparency—a vulture, with the head of Napoleon, chained to a rock, and Britannia bending down, with one hand stretching out the wing of the vulture, and with the other clipping it with shears, on the one blade of which was written Nelson, on the other Wellington. The motto—

> We 've fought for Peace, and conquer'd it at last.
> The ravening Vulture's leg is fetter'd fast.
> Britons, rejoice ! and yet be wary too !
> The chain may break, the clipt wing sprout anew.

And since I have conversed with those who first returned from France, I weekly expected the event. Napoleon's object at present is to embarrass the allies, and to cool the enthusiasm of their subjects. The latter he unfortunately will be too successful in. In London, my lady, it is scarcely possible to distinguish the opinions of the people from the ravings and railings of the mob; but in country towns we must be blind not to see the real state of the popular mind. I do not know whether your ladyship read my letters to Judge Fletcher. I can assure you it is no exaggerated picture of the predominance of Jacobinism. In this small town of Calne 500 volunteers were raised in the last war. I am persuaded that five could not be raised now. A considerable landowner, and a man of great observation, said to me last week, 'A famine, sir, could scarce have produced more evil than the Corn Bill has done under the present circumstances.' I speak nothing of the Bill itself, except that, after the closest attention, and the most sedulous inquiry after facts from landowners, farmers, stewards, millers, and bakers, I am convinced that both opponents and advocates were in extremes, and that an evil produced by many causes was by many remedies to

have been cured, not by the universal elixir of one sweeping law.

My poems will be put to press by the middle of June. A number adequate to one volume are already in the hands of my friends at Bristol, under conditions that *they* are to be published at all events, even though I should not add another volume, which I never had so little reason to doubt. Within the last ten days I have composed three poems, containing 500 lines in the whole.

Mr. and Mrs. Morgan present their respective compliments to your ladyship and Sir George.—I remain, my lady, your ladyship's obliged humble servant, S. T. COLERIDGE.

[1] *The Prelude.*—ED.

SOUTHEY to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Keswick, 1 *Feby.* 1817.

My dear Sir,—We have usually a good many water-fowl offered for sale at this time of the year, but this winter we have had none, from which I conclude that the season has been as mild abroad as it is at home, and that the web-footed family, who direct their movements by the temperature, and not by the almanac, are waiting till the winter begins. I should very much enjoy this mild open weather if I had not some apprehensions for what is to come. Vegetation is fearfully premature in this country. The children gathered a primrose and a *flos adonis* on Christmas Day; to-day they brought me in wall-flowers, and the polyanthuses have been in full bloom for some time. It looks ill to see things thus out of time. If the seasons continue out of order we may dread the failure of another harvest, and, in the present state of men's minds, such an evil is indeed to be dreaded. But for one's own personal feelings never was such a month of January. I

was on Walla Crag a fortnight ago, and a day in September could not have been warmer. And for *effects*, never have I witnessed finer than what have been almost daily displayed, from vast masses of soft swelling cloud, hovering about the whole range of mountains from Borrowdale to Grisdale, and the sun—who shouts to the god of painters as well as poets—moving among them, and producing all imaginable glories. A few days back there was the most striking effect I ever remember to have seen. The depth of Newlands was filled with an exceedingly dark cloud, in form like a truncated pyramid, and the sun appearing just upon the summit, shot its rays down on all sides, literally like streams of light.

Miss Barker is painting with great perseverance, and, as far as I can judge, with great success. She tells me a great deal about difficulties, and of being provoked with what she has done, and with what she is doing, but she goes on as long as the light will permit. Miss Hutchinson is with her at present, and has been employing herself very kindly as an amanuensis for me. Hartley is safely landed at Merton, and Derwent returned this day to school.

The papers interest me very much at this time.

I am a good deal surprised at Marquis Wellesley's speech upon the Address. Of all cries, the cry for retrenchment is the most senseless. Of the many causes which have combined to produce the existing difficulties, the greatest is unquestionably a sudden and enormous diminution of expenditure,—Government spending from forty to fifty millions a year less than during the war. And as a remedy for this unavoidable evil they are advised to diminish the expenditure still further! Nor does any person seem to perceive that when so many hands are out of employ, every soldier that shall be disbanded must either want employ himself, or deprive some other person of it: so many as you disband so many will you cast, in some form or other, upon the public, *totidem numeris*, if not *totidem personis*. Some will go to the parish, some to the highway, and not a few will be found in the mobs which are beginning to try their strength with the established authorities.

I am glad to see the decided manner in which Mr. Canning spoke concerning Parliamentary Reform. Yet there are some things which I could wish we were well rid of, as Tillotson said of the damnatory clauses in the Athanasian Creed. The

great sinecures are among these things: the saving to be effected by abolishing them is a mere nothing, not worthy to be mentioned, but they afford a fair topic for mischievous men, and therefore, as long as they continue, they do a great deal of harm. But if there were no other objection to removing them, the triumph which it would give these vagabonds, in whatever manner the thing were done, is a very weighty one. I well remember when the Talents came into power, thinking that *that* was the time. An enormous increase of taxation was necessarily laid on. Had the Grenvilles then given up their sinecures (instead of passing an Act for enabling Lord G. to hold two places, which his own subsequent conduct clearly proved ought not to have been united in one person), they would have acquired a popularity which even their blunders could scarcely have shaken.

My good friend Nash has a very deep sense of the kindness which he experienced at Coleorton. We mean to pass six weeks together on the Continent in the months of May and June; so I shall hope to see you in April on my way through town. If Mr. Westall be with you, pray remember me to him. My 'womankind,' as the Antiquary

calls them, beg to be remembered to Lady Beaumont; so would our neighbours if they knew I were writing.—Believe me, Sir George, very truly and respectfully yours,

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

SOUTHEY to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Keswick, 8th Feby. 1819.

Dear Sir George,— . . . notwithstanding the marvellous mildness of the season. Marvellous it may well be called. The summits of the mountains were free of snow till the last week in January; what had fallen before that time had never remained twelve hours. The valley has only been whitened once, and then only inch-deep, and for half a day, and the ground has never been hard frozen. We had a greater variety of flowers at Christmas than April in all likelihood will supply.

You are going to Switzerland, I hear, and though we shall miss you in the autumn, I am glad that you have determined upon an excursion which will give you so much pleasure, and concerning which I shall have so much pleasure in talking with you. Whatever route you may take, I hope you will not omit the ride from Meiringhen to Sarnen, the lake and valley of Lungern

being (Interlaken *perhaps* alone excepted) the loveliest scene which I remember in the country. And the little valleys which you cross in passing the Brunig are the very perfection of pastoral scenery. But I am particularly desirous that you should see the Flying Tree,—the most astonishing thing that I have ever seen, or ever expect to see. I have very much repented that we did not remain a day for the purpose of seeing the scaffolding both in the mountain where it begins, and at the river where it terminates. It is about two miles from Sarnen, on the way to Alpnach. Let me also recommend to you our Unterseen guide, Hans Roth, for whose good-nature and good qualities Nash will vouch, and whose honest countenance will recommend itself. He was ten days in our company, and we were so attached to him that we were quite sorry when the time of parting came.

I fear you will see our country with altered eyes when you return to it, though I can perfectly understand why it is in some respects more suited to a painter's purposes. But Switzerland excels as much in beauty as in grandeur. I do not envy the magnitude of its mountains, for which far too great a price is paid, in the per-

petual insecurity which they occasion (to say nothing of the foul waters which they produce), but there is a beauty in the softer scenery which may well be envied, and in the Alpine valleys a charm altogether peculiar. I am now remembering more particularly those which lie between Martigny and Chamouny.

Wordsworth may be congratulated upon coming off so well in the Magazine.[1] The print is not so good as the drawing in my possession, because it does not so well represent his capacious forehead; but on the whole it is a respectable likeness, and would be thought excellent by those who are not intimate with his face. I have figured twice in the Magazines with much worse fortune: once they made me like a Calvinist preacher, and once like a writing-master.

I am drawing near the close of a long and most arduous labour. Five or six weeks hence I hope to finish my *History of Brazil*, which has been ten whole years in mind, though not in hand. I believe no History was ever before compiled with such unweariable diligence from scattered documents. It has been the great work and the great pleasure of my life.

Remember us most kindly to Lady Beaumont.

The girls (who are sorely disappointed at the news of your intended travels) desire particularly that I will not omit to mention them. We are all tolerably well, but wishing anxiously that the next three or four weeks were over.—Believe me, Sir George, very truly, your obliged and obedient ROBERT SOUTHEY.

[1] Doubtless the engraving of Carruthers' picture, by Henry Meyer, which appeared in Colburn's *New Monthly Magazine*, in Feb. 1819.—ED.

SOUTHEY to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Keswick, 5th March 1819.

My dear Sir George,—I am indeed gratified by your offer of becoming one of the sponsors to this infant, and truly proud should I have been to have received so kind a mark of friendship, if it could have been so. But Grosvenor Bedford requested some months ago that if the child should prove a boy, he might hold the same relation to it which he had done to his dear brother, and that same feeling induced me, as soon as he was born, to desire that Charles W. Wynn would do the same. I mean to call him Cuthbert; you who know Wordsworth's poems so well will understand why.[1] From most people I keep such feelings out of sight, as if I were ashamed of them, and for them it is reason enough that it is a good Saxon name, still in use in Northumberland and Durham, and neither so general as to be common, nor so strange as to have any appearance of affectation.

He was born in the study, and when he opened his eyes, I would say, if wishes could influence the course of his life, what he was born to was before him. You will wonder how this should have happened. The high winds about Christmas gave an ugly shake to a high chimney which, if it were to receive such another *airquake*, might probably make its way through the roof into our bedroom. The masons cannot pull it down and rebuild it while there is any chance of frost; they patched it as well as they could, but lest we should both be killed, or one of us frightened to death, it was necessary that we should shift our quarters, and as no other apartment in the house would afford the needful accommodation, my study was converted into my lady's chamber, and I have taken up my abode in what was formerly Coleridge's, but now goes by the name of All Saints' Room, in honour of my delectable folios.

The places which I am very desirous you should see in Switzerland are luckily of the easiest access, partly by water, partly by the carriages of the country. Protestant Switzerland has probably suffered less in the general dislocation of principles and morals than any other part

of Europe; still, it has suffered much. This I learnt from some ministers in the Pays de Vaud. But the German cantons are likely to have escaped better than the French.

I have heard of the *Peasant of Auburn*. Lady Byron wrote to my brother expressing a wish that I would introduce it to public notice. But as to all such purposes I am completely out of the world, and could as soon get a place in Parliament as in the *Quarterly Review* for any one whom I wished to serve. I believe the book is now at Murray's, waiting till he sends me a parcel.

My visit to London will take place at the end of April. By that time the last volume of *Brazil* will be published, and I will leave *Wesley* unfinished rather than delay my journey to a less convenient season.

Mother and daughters desire their kindest remembrances to Lady Beaumont. Present mine also, and believe me, my dear Sir George, with the sincerest regard, your obliged friend,

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

[1] See the *Inscription* 'for the spot where the Hermitage stood on St. Herbert's Island, Derwentwater.'—ED.

SIR WALTER SCOTT to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Edin., 4 *Jan.* 1821.

My dear Sir George,—I would [not] have lost so many days in answering your kind letter, but my daughter has been very unwell, and, though now, thank God, she is recovering, has alarmed us very much.

My late preferment is as much undeserved as anything of the kind can be; for of Science I know positively no more than may be gathered from the lecture on the Cosmogony of the World, in the *Vicar of Wakefield.* But I must try to make up my deficiencies in much courting tea, coffee, cake, sandwiches, and wine and water—all which may be managed without much philosophy.

It will be a great inducement to me to go out of my road, were it for a much greater distance than Coleorton, to visit Lady Beaumont and you; and I hope some day or other to have that pleasure. But I have no speedy prospect of coming to London, for here 'I dwell among my

own people,' with little inclination to leave them, except to see the friends whom Time has left me in England; and, as my acquaintances twenty years ago were chiefly formed among people older than myself, I feel more lamentable gaps in my London society than mere age might have obliged me to submit to. The few that are left are the dearer to me, and I am much obliged to you, my dear Sir George, for permitting me to rank you among the much valued number. Do you and Lady Beaumont never think of a Scotch tour? I know you have been here before, but surely the Highlands have a great deal worth exploring or revisiting to one who understands scenery so well; and our country, though neither picturesque nor romantic, is interesting as containing many curious remains of antiquity, and as having been the scene of various events of historical interest. The upshot of which is that if Lady Beaumont and you turn our way, we would do our possible to make you comfortable, for as many weeks as you could by any means spare us, and I would hope to find you some amusement. The London papers were so good as to assault my house the other day, but let not that deter you, or alarm Lady B., for there are

few houses (if the times should turn worse, which God forbid) less in danger of being attacked, or more certain of being defended, as I have (to use our phrase) a considerable *following*, who were very wroth at the aforesaid rumour.—Once more, dear Sir George, with many kind thanks for your remembrance, and all the best wishes of the New Year, I am most truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT.

COLERIDGE to LADY BEAUMONT.

Saturday, ½ after 11.

Dear Madam,—My messenger, a descendant from the old kings of Tipperary, and skilled in the craft of list slipper-making and shoe-mending; moreover, under my auspices during the last nine years has made such progress in literature as to be able to pick out the letters of a direction, if the MSS. be of large type, and it had been read to him previously—this trusty messenger (for such he had hitherto proved to *me*, though I had heard it whispered that he was one of these mortals whom Nature had made of bibulous sand instead of the *Red Clay* (for so does the Hebrew '*Adam*' signify), which is the more orthodox material),—this once trusty and often trusted messenger, on his return from Mr. George Frere's at Hampstead (to which place he had been despatched yesternoon with a letter from me, enclosing your ladyship's card, and a note of my own to Mr. G. H. Frere), unfortu-

nately meeting some royal sixteenth cousin in the disguise of a haymaker, had drank such copious draughts of oblivion as to all present humilities, and of remembrance of glories long past, that he presented himself to me in the form of a penitent, pushed on by his wife, weeping and scolding, at nine o'clock this morning—the first time of his appearance. He *had* received a letter from Miss Frere; he believed that there was likewise a verbal message for Mrs. Gillman, but of neither were either his brain (skull, I should say) nor his pocket continent or cognisant. But, lo! some ten or fifteen minutes ago a girl called to ask whether any one in this house would own a letter she had picked up in a ditch in Milfield Lane, which proved to be the card with the enclosed from Mrs. George Frere.

I am now going to seek an envoy with a less numerous regiment of itinerant relatives, to despatch with this note, and with a note and the card to Mr. Frere at Lady Orde's. I shall direct him to go first to Gloucester Place, and thence to Grosvenor Square.—With my best respects to Sir George, I am, dear Madam, your obliged friend, S. T. COLERIDGE.

WORDSWORTH to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

6th Jan. 1821.

My dear Sir George,—Yesterday I performed a great feat—wrote no less than seven letters, reserving yours for to-day, that I might have more leisure, and you consequently less trouble in reading. I have been a good deal tossed about since our arrival here. Mrs. W. and I were first called away by the sudden death of my kinsman Mr. Myers. We went to College together, and were inseparables for many years. I saw him buried in Millom Church, by the side of his wife. The churchyard is romantically situated — Duddon Sands on one side, and a rocky hill scattered over with ancient trees on the other. Close by are the remains of the old castle of the Huddlestones, part of which are converted into farm-houses, and the whole embowered in tall trees that tower up from the sides and bottom of the circular moat. The churchyard is in like manner girt round with

trees. The church is of striking architecture, and apparently of remote antiquity. We entered with the funeral train, the day being too far advanced to allow the clergyman to see to read the Service, and no light had been provided, so we sate some time, in solemn silence. At last one candle was brought, which served both for minister and clerk, casting a wan light on their faces. On my right hand were two stone figures in a recumbent position (like those of the monument in Coleorton Church)—Huddlestones of other years, and the voice of the minister was accompanied, and almost interrupted, by the slender sobbing of a young person, an Indian by half blood, and by the father's side a niece of the deceased wife of the person whom we were interring. She hung over the coffin and continued this Oriental lamentation till the service was over, everybody else, except one faithful servant, being apparently indifferent. Mrs. W., I find, has mentioned our return by Duddonside, and how much we were pleased with the winter appearance of my favourite river.

Since that expedition, I have been called to Appleby, and detained there upon business. In

returning, I was obliged to make a circuit which showed me for the time several miles of the course of that beautiful stream the Eden, from the bridge near Temple Sowerby down to Kirkoswald. Part of this tract of country I had indeed seen before, but not from the same points of view. It is a charming region, particularly at the spot where the Eden and Emont join. The rivers appeared exquisitely brilliant, gliding under rocks and through green meadows, with woods and sloping cultivated grounds, and pensive russet moors interspersed, and along the circuit of the horizon, lofty hills and mountains clothed, rather than concealed, in fleecy clouds and resplendent vapours.

My road brought me suddenly and unexpectedly upon that ancient monument, called by the country people Long Meg and her Daughters. Everybody has heard of it, and so had I from very early childhood, but had never seen it before. Next to Stonehenge, it is beyond dispute the most noble relic of the kind that this or probably any other country contains. Long Meg is a single block of unhewn stone, eighteen feet high, at a small distance from a vast circle of other stones, some of them of huge

size, though curtailed of their stature by their own incessant pressure upon it.

Did you ever see that part of the Eden? If not, you must contrive it. I was brought to Kirkoswald, but had not time to visit Nunnery, which I purpose to do next summer. Indeed, we have a thought of taking the whole course of the Eden from Carlisle upwards, which will bring us near the source of the Lune, so that we may track that river to Lancaster, and so return home by Flookborough and Cartmel.

It is now high time to say a word about Coleorton. I often have the image before me of your pleasant labours, and see the landscape growing under your patient hand. The large picture you were about must be finished long since. How are you satisfied with it? I am not a little proud that our scenery employs your pencil so sedulously after a visit to the Alps. It has lost little in my estimation by the comparison. At first I thought the coppice woods—and, alas! we have little else—very shabby substitutes for the unshorn majesty of what I had lately seen. The rocks and crags also seem to want breadth and repose, their surfaces appearing too often crumbled and frittered. But, on

the other hand, the comparison is often to our advantage. The lakes and streams not only are so much more pure and crystalline, but the surfaces of the one, and the courses of the other, present a far more attractive variety—a superiority which deserves to be set off at length, but which will strike your practised mind immediately. It happened that Southey, who was so good as to come over to see us, mentioned to me Nichols' book[1] with great commendation.—Ever yours, W. W.

[1] Doubtless Nichols' *History and Antiquities of Leicester*. —ED.

SOUTHEY to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Keswick, 1st March 1821.

Dear Sir George,—My publishers are directed to send you a copy of the *Vision of Judgment*, which I trust you will find on your arrival in Grosvenor Square. It is chiefly as a metrical experiment that I offer it to your notice. You are accustomed to the blank verse of Shakespeare and Milton and Wordsworth; nevertheless, I venture to hope this will not prevent you from feeling that the heroic measure of the ancients retains something of its dignity and power in our language, though the English is certainly less fit for it than either the Greek, the Latin, or the German. Taking it upon the principle of adaptation which I have followed, it appears to me a fine measure, inferior, indeed, to our blank verse (as every other measure is), but possessing in the union of variety and regularity, an advantage peculiar to itself.

The subject is not one which I should have chosen under other circumstances; but when I accepted the Laureateship, it was with a hope of being exempted from the ordinary worthless taskwork which degrades the office, and a determination of exerting myself upon other occasions in a manner which, if that hope were gratified, would prove that I had no desire to shrink from labour, or, if it were not, might redeem the office from contempt. Time enough has now elapsed since the death of the King, and public transactions enough have occurred, to allow of treating the subject in an imaginative manner, which could not have been done without some shock to the feelings, while that event was recent, and had all the awfulness of immediate reality.

You, I am sure, will perceive a want of keeping in that part where the affairs of the Regency are noticed. This fault was unavoidable. I could not offer a tribute of respect to the late King without a just compliment of this kind to the present, and I hope that, though it was not possible to soften or harmonise the transition from fancy to fact, it has been done, where alone it was practicable, when the poem passes from

fact to fancy, and enters again upon the imaginary world. The measure, and the subject, and what I have said, and what I have left unsaid, will bring upon me a hailstone chorus of abuse. It will affect me much less than this abominable east wind, which is now making its way through walls, windows, and curtains to my discomfort, and making itself felt in spite of a leathern waistcoat. But against literary assailants I am armed at all points, and proof.

Two French translations of *Roderick* have been lately published. One of them has been sent me. The translator has not Frenchified it by any additions, but it is curious to see how skilfully he has contrived to skip every image and every expression which had any peculiar force or propriety. In this respect the version reminds me of what happens among peacocks where a white bird has crossed the breed—the degeneracy shows itself in the eye of the feather, even when all other parts of the plumage remain untainted. It would surprise me greatly if, after all that has been done to trim it to the French taste, anything so completely anti-Gallican in style, feeling, and composition, should meet with any approbation in France.

At present I am very busy with the *Peninsular War*, with which the printer is proceeding steadily; and among other works of secondary import, I am going on with a series of dialogues upon the progress and the prospects of society. These are interspersed with local descriptions of this immediate neighbourhood, to relieve the subject, and render a wholesome prescription palatable. William Westall has made half a dozen very beautiful drawings of the scenes which are to be engraved for the book. One of them is a view of this house, looking towards Newlands.

You have probably heard from the Wordsworths of the death of my poor friend Nash, which has been a great grief to me, as well as a great shock. We had spent a great deal of time together at home and abroad, and had planned other journeys, which it is now painful to think of. I never knew a man more thoroughly amiable in all his feelings, indeed I never saw in him the slightest action, nor heard from him a sentence or a word, which could lower him in my esteem; and then he bore his cross so meekly, that it was impossible to know him, and not to regard him with some degree

of admiration as well as with pity. Mrs. S. and Edith join in kind remembrances to Lady Beaumont.—Believe me to be, dear Sir George, very truly and respectfully yours,

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

SOUTHEY to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Keswick, 8th Oct. 1822.

My dear Sir,—It gives me great pleasure to hear from yourself of your safe return to England. Travelling is indeed delightful for those who have no cares or anxieties to distract them and draw their thoughts homeward. Even in the least interesting parts of a foreign land there is always something to excite curiosity, to deserve notice, to keep the mind on the alert. But to visit the most interesting of all countries, to be capable of understanding and enjoying whatever is most interesting there, and to enjoy it at leisure as you have done, is what I should envy, if it were allowable to envy anything.

Canova, as you describe him, is not less admirable as a man than as an artist. I would fain think, as well as hope, that this is usually the case with those who are most eminent in any intellectual pursuit, that exceptions when we see them are deviations from the course of nature,

and that a wicked man of genius is a monster in the moral world. From what you say of him, I should think he must sometimes wish himself a painter. To me the finest sculpture compared with a picture seems like a cold abstraction. But on the other hand there is a durability in marble which affects my mind very strongly: no term can be assigned to its duration, no common accident is likely to reach it, and in this world of decay and change it is consolitary to contemplate anything over which time has no power. Therefore if, like Canova, I could have chosen between the two arts, I should, like him, have trusted my fame to marble rather than to canvas.

I have not been in London since I saw you there. How I have been employing myself will in part be seen when the first volume of the *Peninsular War* goes forth. It has been printed several weeks, and Murray is delaying its appearance till what the booksellers call their season shall begin. My health suffered a good deal in the early part of the year. A violent catarrh, to which I have been subject for the last twenty years as regularly as the summer begins, laid stronger hold upon me than it had ever done before, and effected a lodgment in my

chest, which might easily have become serious. Withal my whole system was sadly relaxed. As soon as I was capable of exertion, I resolved to try a course of continued exercise. This I began about midsummer; a succession of guests assisted in drawing me out; and I have persevered in it with wonderful effect, though too much to the derangement of my needful pursuits. But it has brought me into such good condition, that I am at this time as capable of any exertion among these mountains as I ever was in my life. My brother, the Doctor, made me a short visit lately, and left me with strict injunctions to keep up the same course as far as possible through the winter. At the end of February, or beginning of March, I must visit town. You will no doubt be there before me or I should very gladly take Coleorton in my way. Before I leave home I shall publish that sketch of our religious history to which Wordsworth alludes in his Preface.[1] It is in the press, and I hope it may answer the end for which it is designed.

My family, thank God, are all in good health. They are greatly changed since you saw them. Edith is now taller than her mother, Bertha a great girl, and Kate and Isabel no longer little

ones. My little Cuthbert is the delight of all who know him. I think you and Lady Beaumont would perceive in him a resemblance which I often feel, not in features—for the eyes are very different,—but in the character and expression of the countenance.

The kindness expressed in your letter encourages me to say something which I have long wished to say. It is, that nothing would be more gratifying to me than to possess some little memorial of your hand,[2] which I should look at with pleasure, and show with pride, and which would be valued as it ought by those who come after me.

Present our kindest regards to Lady Beaumont, and believe me, dear Sir George, with sincere respect, yours faithfully,

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

[1] The Preface to the *Ecclesiastical Sketches*, published in 1822. Southey's work was called *The Book of the Church*; and Wordsworth, in the Preface referred to, described it as 'a concise history of the Church in England.' Compare p. 214.—ED.

[2] See the letter dated July 10, 1824.—ED.

MRS. WORDSWORTH to LADY BEAUMONT.

February 5th, 1823.

My dear Lady Beaumont,—I have delayed sending you the poem,[1] and also to reply to your last kind letter, in the hope of being able to speak decisively about the intended visit to Coleorton.

* * * * *

Mrs. C. and Sara have been some time at Highgate. She wrote soon after their arrival there, and gave a cheerful account of C. She spoke of going into Devonshire about the middle of March. We seldom see Hartley, but as we hear little of him, and that little in his favour, we hope he is spending his time to some good purpose; but as to the discipline of Mr. Dawes' school, that cannot much restrain him, as I believe there are not more than four boys.

* * * * *

I hope the verses will afford you pleasure. Her ladyship wrote a very proper reply when

they were sent to her; but how far they may have power to act as a 'peace-offering' we much doubt, but heartily wish they may. The severe weather has put a stop to all progress with the work. If you or Sir George could send us any hints or sketch for a chapel that would look well in this situation, it is possible that we could have it made useful—through her agents. We are very anxious that nothing should be done to disfigure the village. They might, good taste directing them, add much to its beauty. The site chosen is the orchard opposite the door leading to the lower waterfall.

[1] This letter follows a copy of the poem *To Lady C. Fleming*, January 1823.—ED.

SOUTHEY to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Keswick, 4th Oct. 1823.

My dear Sir,—I must begin by performing a commission, arising, I am sorry to say, as you will be to hear, from the death of Mr. Edmondson. By his desire I am to say that a hamper of yours, which was left in his care, will be as secure with his family as it was during his lifetime. This most useful and meritorious man died on Monday last, worn out by an internal disease, with which he had struggled for the last two years. A subscription is proposed for placing a tablet in the church to his memory. His professional skill, the conscientiousness of his charges, and the laborious course of duty in which his life was passed, deserve this tribute. It will be creditable to the people of this place that this should be done, and you do men good by raising them in their own esteem when you engage them in anything which partakes of a generous or a grateful feeling. What a different world would

this be if half the pains were taken to call forth good feelings which are employed in exciting and fostering evil ones!

My first thought when I read of Canova's death was of you. The death of a friend so remotely situated that we have no hope or prospect of seeing him again is nevertheless felt as a loss, and is one in reality. He may be nearer to us than when he existed in the same world, and even more intimately sensible of our regard for him. This is a consolatory thought. But all our associations connected with the dead change their character, and thus our happiest recollections die before us. The longer we live the stronger those ties become which attract us toward another world, and the fewer and the weaker those that attach us to this. Faith and hope then become essential parts of our nature, and thus we gain more than we lose.

I should indeed be delighted to enjoy Rome in your company. The hope of seeing that city is among my dreams, but whether the dream will ever be fulfilled is very doubtful. My course of life, though in every respect the happiest (I verily believe) into which a merciful Providence could have led me, seems at present not very

likely to afford me the means or the leisure. Nevertheless I dream of such things, and have lived to realise some things which appeared less feasible.

You will, I think, be pleased with the paper on Spain in the last *Quarterly*. It is written by Blanco White, the author of *Leucadio Doblado's Letters*, a very interesting person; by birth a Spaniard of Irish-Catholic extraction, and at one time holding some preferment in the Cathedral of Seville. He came over to this country a thorough *Liberal* in his opinions, disbelieving everything. Here he was led into a right course of inquiry, and I believe that at this time the Church of England has not a more thoroughly pious man among her ministers.

I am in daily expectation of seeing Wordsworth on his return from Whitehaven, where he is with the Lonsdales. The accounts of little William are good, except that application to study is found neither to agree with him nor his brother at this time.

At present I am closely occupied in finishing the long promised *Book of the Church*. It has grown into two volumes, and the cost bestowed upon it has (as usual in most cases) more than

doubled the estimate. I hope, however, it has not been ill bestowed. As soon as it is done I shall set out with my daughter Edith for London, probably the first week in November. Shall you be at Coleorton then? If so, it would give me great pleasure to direct my course in that direction, and pass a few days with you.

My family, thank God, are in tolerable health, and my little boy everything that we could wish him at his age. Mrs. Coleridge and Sara desire to be particularly mentioned. Present our kindest respects to Lady Beaumont, and believe me, dear Sir George, with sincere regard and respect, yours faithfully,

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

SOUTHEY to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Keswick, 2d Nov. 1823.

My dear Sir,—We are on the eve of our departure, and if the weather should allow us to look at the Yorkshire caves, Gordale Scar, Bolton Abbey, and the Peak Cavern, we shall reach Matlock on Saturday night, pass the better part of the Sunday there, see our fellow-travellers off from Derby on the Monday, and present ourselves at Coleorton on the afternoon of that day. Should our plans be curtailed by the rain, we may arrive on the Saturday.

It is no small effort for me to leave home, rooted to it as I am by so many habits. But among the pleasures to which I look on as a recompence, that of halting under your roof is not the least.

Mrs. S., her sisters, and Sara Coleridge join in kind remembrances to Lady Beaumont. If the season be as prematurely severe with you as it is with us, we shall see her winter garden to advantage.—Believe me, dear Sir George, with sincere respect and regard, yours faithfully,

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

SOUTHEY to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Keswick, 10th July 1824.

My dear Sir,—Yesterday evening I had the great pleasure, for such it truly was, of receiving your picture. It is a beautiful example of the manner in which, according to your principle, real subjects should be treated. You have dealt with this landscape as a poet does with an historical tale: modifying it to his purpose, and supplying whatever it wanted to make it suitable for his art. I thank you most sincerely for it; and this I can venture to say, that you have never painted a picture which will be regarded with more delight, nor prized more highly by its possessor.

You give us hopes of seeing you in the autumn. By that time I trust I shall be in a condition to accompany you in some of your excursions. My usual visitant at this season has seized me somewhat more violently than usual, and effected a lodgment in the chest, where it keeps its ground

more obstinately than in any former attack. The inconvenience is more in the debility which it induces, by making me keep house when the catarrh is in full force, than in the complaint itself. Next year I will, if it be possible to get from home, try to fly from it; and as I know by an experience of more than twenty years that the only chance of escaping it is by travelling at the season when it would otherwise certainly come on, I will endeavour to set off at the end of April, and spend six or eight weeks on the Continent, probably in Holland and the north of Germany.

You will have seen by the papers that the Floating Island has made its appearance. It sunk again last week, when some heavy rains had raised the lake four feet. By good fortune Professor Sedgwick happened to be in Keswick, and examined it in time. Where he probed it a thin layer of mud lies upon a bed of peat which is six feet thick, and this rests upon a stratum of fine white clay, the same I believe which Miss Barker found in Borrowdale when building her unlucky house. Where the gas is generated remains yet to be discovered, but when the peat is filled with this gas, it separates from the clay,

and becomes buoyant. There must have been a considerable convulsion when this took place, for a rent was made in the bottom of the lake several feet in depth, and not less than fifty yards long, on each side of which the bottom rose and floated. It was a pretty sight to see the small fry exploring this new-made strait and darting at the bubbles which rose as the Professor was probing the bank. The discharge of air was considerable here when a pole was thrust down. But at some distance, where the rent did not extend, the bottom had been heaved up in a slight convexity, sloping equally in an inclined plane all round; and there, when the pole was introduced, a rush like a jet followed as it was withdrawn. The thing is the more curious, because as yet no example of it is known to have been observed in any other place.

We miss the two eldest girls sadly. Edith is gone into Devonshire, where I hope she will have leisure to profit by the lessons which she received from Fielding when in town. Bertha is in Hampshire with my friend Rickman's family, and there is little chance of our seeing them on this side Christmas. The others, thank God, are well.

Our kindest respects to Lady Beaumont, in

which Mrs. C. and Sara join. I may add Hartley also, for he is here.—Believe me, dear Sir George, yours with sincere respect and regard,

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

A manufactory of Whitehaven notes has been discovered in this little town. The principal in this hopeful scheme was a bookbinder, of whom I must say, that I could have better spared a better man.

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH to LADY BEAUMONT.

Rydal Mount, 18th Sept., Saturday.[1]

My dear Lady Beaumont,— . . . Now for our own travellers. They have thridded North Wales, and hardly left a celebrated spot unseen. Mr. Jones, my brother's first pedestrian companion on his tour in Switzerland, joined them with his car and servant, and travelled with them everywhere. They were to part at the Devil's Bridge last Tuesday, and on Wednesday expected to reach Mr. Hutchinson's house at Hindwell. They had had fine weather, and no drawback from their pleasure except my brother's poor eyes, which at some times were much inflamed; he, however, kept up his spirits, enjoyed everything, and the whole journey seems to have gone off very well. My letters have been from Dora, who gives a most lively account of what she has seen, especially of the ladies at Llangothlin (I cannot spell these Welsh names), with whom they spent an evening; and were well pleased

with *them* and their entertainment. Dora says of Conway Castle, 'Having left the Vale of Clwydd we soon came in sight of Conway, which I think the king of castles. All that I have heard of it, all that I have seen—even Sir George's picture—nothing gives one a sufficient idea of its grandeur. Here we spent more than three hours, but it would take more than three days to become acquainted with it. The longer I stayed the longer I wished to stay. They are erecting a bridge across the river, on the same plan as at Bangor Ferry, which I think will be an improvement to the appearance of the castle when the newness is worn off.'

So much for the distant travellers; but we, at home, have had our travels. Mrs. Luff, William, and I spent three days in Borrowdale very agreeably—not wholly in Borrowdale, for William and I went over the Stye to Wasdale, with a party of our friends. Bright sunshine after torrents of rain set off the charms of Borrowdale and the sublimities of Scaw Fell to the best advantage, and all were delighted. You will be glad to hear that William, who is my first charge and care during his parents' absence, is much improved in strength and good looks since they left us. John is at

Whitehaven with Mr. William Jackson. Sara Coleridge rode over to us in Borrowdale. I cannot discover any ailment in examining her eyes, nor is there any inflammation on the lids; but, poor girl, she says the uneasiness is often very great, and she cannot endure a strong light. She is extremely thin; I could not but think of a lily flower to be snapped by the first blast when I looked at her delicate form and fair and pallid cheeks. She is busy with proof-sheets—a labour that she likes,—yet I should be glad if it were over, and she could be employed and amused at the same time without exercising her mind by thought and study. Southey is much better, and I think he looks pretty well. He had been on Helvellyn the week before last, a proof of recovered strength! Mrs. C. and the rest of the family well, except Mrs. Lovel. Southey seemed to be very sorry to give up the expectation of seeing Sir George in the north. I told him, however, that there was perhaps a little chance of his coming, recollecting your message to Lord Lonsdale.—Believe me, dear Lady Beaumont, your faithful and affectionate friend, D. WORDSWORTH.

[1] Evidently in 1824.—ED.

WORDSWORTH to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Hindwell, Radnor, Sept. 20, 1824.

My dear Sir George,—After a three weeks' ramble in North Wales, Mrs. Wordsworth, Dora, and myself are set down quietly here for three weeks more. The weather has been delightful, and everything to our wishes. On a beautiful day we took the steam-packet at Liverpool, passed the mouth of the Dee, coasted the extremity of the Vale of Clwyd, sailed close under Great Orm's Head, had a noble prospect of Penmaenmawr, and having almost touched upon Puffin's Island, we reached Bangor Ferry, a little after six in the afternoon. We admired the stupendous preparations for the bridge over the Menai; and breakfasted next morning at Carnarvon. We employed several hours in exploring the interior of the noble castle, and looking at it from different points of view in the neighbourhood. At half-past four we departed for Llanberris, having fine views, as we looked back, of C. Castle,

the sea, and Anglesey. A little before sunset we came in sight of Llanberris Lake, Snowdon, and all the craggy hills and mountains surrounding it; the foreground a beautiful contrast to this grandeur and desolation—a green sloping hollow, furnishing a shelter for one of the most beautiful collections of lowly Welsh cottages, with thatched roofs, overgrown with plants, anywhere to be met with: the hamlet is called Cum-y-glo. And here we took boat, while the solemn lights of evening were receding towards the tops of the mountains. As we advanced, Dolbardin Castle came in view, and Snowdon opened upon our admiration. It was almost dark when we reached the quiet and comfortable inn at Llanberris.

* * * * *

There being no carriage-road, we undertook to walk by the Pass of Llanberris, eight miles, to Capel Cerig; this proved fatiguing, but it was the only oppressive exertion we made during the course of our tour. We arrived at Capel Cerig in time for a glance at the Snowdonian range, from the garden of the inn in connection with the lake (or rather pool), reflecting the crimson clouds of evening. The outline of Snowdon is perhaps seen nowhere to more advantage than

from this place. Next morning, five miles down a beautiful valley to the banks of the Conway, which stream we followed to Llanrwst; but the day was so hot that we could only make use of the morning and evening. Here we were joined, according to previous arrangement, by Bishop Hobart, of New York, who remained with us till two o'clock next day, and left us to complete his hasty tour through North and South Wales. In the afternoon arrived my old college friend and youthful companion among the Alps, the Rev. R. Jones, and in his car we all proceeded to the Falls of the Conway, thence up that river to a newly-erected inn on the Irish road, where we lodged; having passed through bold and rocky scenery along the banks of a stream which is a feeder of the Dee. Next morning we turned from the Irish road three or four miles to visit the 'Valley of Meditation' (Glyn Mavyr), where Mr. Jones has, at present, a curacy, with a comfortable parsonage. We slept at Corwen, and went down the Dee to Llangollen, which you and dear Lady B. know well. Called upon the celebrated Recluses,[1] who hoped that you and Lady B. had not forgotten them; they certainly had not forgotten you, and they begged us to

say that they retained a lively remembrance of you both. We drank tea and passed a couple of hours with them in the evening, having visited the aqueduct over the Dee and Chirk Castle in the afternoon. Lady E. has not been well, and has suffered much in her eyes, but she is surprisingly lively for her years. Miss P. is apparently in unimpaired health. Next day I sent them the following sonnet from Ruthin, which was conceived, and in a great measure composed, in their grounds—

> A stream, to mingle with your favourite Dee,
> Along the *Vale of Meditation* flows;
> So named by those fierce Britons, pleased to see
> In Nature's face the expression of repose, etc. etc.

* * * * *

We passed three days with Mr. Jones's friends in the Vale of Clwyd, looking about us, and on the Tuesday set off again, accompanied by our friend, to complete our tour. We dined at Conway, walked to Bennarth, the view from which is a good deal choked up with wood. A small part of the castle has been demolished, for the sake of the new road to communicate with the suspension bridge, which they are about to make to the small island opposite the castle,

to be connected by a long embankment with the opposite shore. The bridge will, I think, prove rather ornamental when time has taken off the newness of its supporting masonry; but the mound deplorably impairs the majesty of the water at high-tide; in fact it destroys its lake-like appearance. Our drive to Aber in the evening was charming; sun setting in glory. We had also a delightful walk next morning up the vale of Aber, terminated by a lofty waterfall; not much in itself, but most striking as a closing accompaniment to the secluded valley. Here, in the early morning, I saw an odd sight—fifteen milkmaids together, laden with their brimming pails. How cheerful and happy they appeared! and not a little inclined to joke after the manner of the pastoral persons in Theocritus. That day brought us to Capel Cerig again, after a charming drive up the banks of the Ogwen, having previously had beautiful views of Bangor, the sea, and its shipping. From Capel Cerig down the justly celebrated vale of Nant Gwynant to Bethgelart. In this vale are two small lakes, the higher of which is the only Welsh lake which has any pretensions to compare with our own; and it has one great advantage over them, that it remains

wholly free from intrusive objects. We saw it early in the morning; and with the greenness of the meadows at its head, the steep rocks on one of its shores, and the bold mountains at *both* extremities, a feature almost peculiar to itself, it appeared to us truly enchanting. The village of Bethgelart is much altered for the worse: new and formal houses have, in a great measure, supplanted the old rugged and tufted cottages, and a smart hotel has taken the place of the lowly public-house, in which I took refreshment almost thirty years ago, previous to a midnight ascent to the summit of Snowdon. At B. we were agreeably surprised by the appearance of Mr. Hare, of New College, Oxford. We slept at Tan-y-bylch, having employed the afternoon in exploring the beauties of the vale of Festiniog. Next day to Barmouth, whence, the following morning, we took boat and rowed up its sublime estuary, which may compare with the finest of Scotland, having the advantage of a superior climate. From Dolgelly we went to Tal-y-llyn, a solitary and very interesting lake under Cader Idris. Next day, being Sunday, we heard service performed in Welsh, and in the afternoon went part of the way down a beautiful valley to Machyn-

leth, next morning to Aberystwith, and up the Rhydiol to the Devil's Bridge, where we passed the following day in exploring those two rivers, and Hafod in the neighbourhood. I had seen these things long ago, but either my memory or my powers of observation had not done them justice. It rained heavily in the night, and we saw the waterfalls in perfection. While Dora was attempting to make a sketch from the chasm in the rain, I composed by her side the following address to the torrent:—

> How art thou named? In search of what strange land,
> From what huge height descending? Can such force
> Of water issue from a British source?

Next day, viz., last Wednesday, we reached this place, and found all our friends well, except our good and valuable friend, Mr. Monkhouse, who is here, and in a very alarming state of health. His physicians have ordered him to pass the winter in Devonshire, fearing a consumption; but he is certainly not suffering under a regular hectic pulmonary decline: his pulse is good, so is his appetite, and he has no fever, but is deplorably emaciated. He is a near relation of Mrs. W., and one, as you know, of my best friends. I hope to see Mr. Price, at Foxley, in a few days. Mrs.

W.'s brother is about to change his present residence for a farm close by Foxley.

Now, my dear Sir George, what chance is there of your being in Wales during any part of the autumn? I would strain a point to meet you anywhere, were it only for a couple of days. Write immediately, or should you be absent without Lady B. she will have the goodness to tell me of your movements. I saw the Lowthers just before I set off, all well. You probably have heard from my sister. It is time to make an end of this long letter, which might have been somewhat less dry if I had not wished to make you master of our whole route. Except ascending one of the high mountains, Snowdon or Cader Idris, we omitted nothing, and saw as much as the shortened days would allow.—With love to Lady B. and yourself, dear Sir George, from us all, I remain, ever, most faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

[1] The Lady E. Butler and the Hon. Miss Ponsonby.—ED.

MRS. WORDSWORTH to LADY BEAUMONT.

Rydal Mount, Dec. 9th, [1824].

My dear Lady Beaumont,—I lose not a moment to tell you that W. has made up his mind to avail himself of your proposal that the carriage shall be turned over to you, on the ground that the money which was to pay for it (viz., part of the produce of the new edition) is gone in another direction—the purchase of the field. We all earnestly hope with you that the time for building will never arrive, but it is an amusement to talk of, and when spring comes the employment of planting upon *his own land* (though under such a tenure it can scarcely be called so) will be a great amusement to William, and stand him in the stead of driving one or two of us in the carriage, which I am sure, under existing circumstances, it is prudent to give up, as your kindness allows us to do so. The field was an extravagant price, but, lying where it does, it cannot be a loss in the end. And we did hope that the possession

of it might be the means of our being permitted to remain at Rydal Mount. I fear we herein have judged wrong. You take the right view of making the best of our disappointment (if aught so uncertain can be called one) in regard to Merton. Yet from the Bishop of London's opinion we have gathered hope that the thing is not impossible. He says, 'I can hardly conceive that there can be any direct exclusion of the diocese of Chester in the Book of Merton. If there be it must be of recent enactment, that diocese having been formed out of parcels of York and Lichfield, which one would think would have continued to enjoy their ancient privileges notwithstanding the change of jurisdiction.' We have therefore, in conformity to the good Bishop's suggestion, made application at Oxford, and the result will settle the point. If, unexpectedly, it prove favourable, W. is determined that the apparent difficulty of the pursuit shall not discourage his efforts; and, indeed, from every letter we have received we have good hope of success *eventually*. Lord Lonsdale had procured us the vote of General Capel, and Mr. Canning and many others, whose interest could not be questioned, expressed not only willingness,

but *pleasure* at the opportunity given them to hope they might be of service to W. This is gratifying, if nothing else comes of it; in which case many considerations are at hand to persuade me it is best it should be so. Under any consideration it would be most satisfactory to us if John's thoughts should rest upon the Church; but this is a delicate subject, and unless his own mind, in conjunction with our own wishes, which are not unknown to him, led him thither, we should think it wrong to *press* him into the sacred profession merely to gain a worldly maintenance. The Army is out of the question; he knows that; and, strong as his bias towards the profession seems to be, at his age, and in times of peace, he would not give way to it. You are very good to be interested, and allow me to write to you, about him. This subject leads me to another, which you will not be sorry to hear has ended as it has done. The Bishop of Chester cannot ordain J. Carter consistent with the rules he has prescribed to himself—not to ordain any who have not been from the first educated for the ministry, *i.e.* those who have followed other business, or, who have not been at the University, or at St. Bees. J. C. is too honourable to seek for

ordination in any other diocese after this declaration, and has given up the thought of going into the Church. I should have been sorry, did I not believe that some other means of advancing himself—more useful to others, as well as more profitable to himself—may without difficulty be hit upon; in the meanwhile he is invaluable where he is.

We have had some few mild days, but the winter has set in very fiercely. From Herefordshire we hear wonderful reports of the fineness of the season, and good tidings of Mrs. Hutchinson, which you will be glad to learn. I conclude that Lady Susan Percy has left, Coleorton, as you mention, being shut up for the winter. I enjoy, in imagination, the quiet of your fireside. I am to send you a corrected copy of Sonnet suggested by you, therefore, dear Lady B., with best love and respectful remembrances from all, believe me ever to be affectionately yours,

M. WORDSWORTH.

WORDSWORTH to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

May 28th [1825], *Rydal Mount.*

My dear Sir George,—It delights me indeed to receive a Letter from you written in such a happy state of mind. Heaven grant that your best wishes may be realised; and surely the promises from this alliance are of the fairest kind. What you say of George gives me great pleasure; I hope he will enter into your feelings and Lady Beaumont's in respect to Coleorton, with a becoming spirit; so that your views may not be frustrated. This I have much at heart. The place is worthy of the pains you have taken with it, and one cannot breathe a better wish for him, as your successor, than that his duties there should become his principal pleasure. How glad should we be to hear that Lady Beaumont is tranquillised; I wish we could transport her hither for a week at least under this quiet roof, in this bright and fragrant season of fresh green leaves and blossoms. Never, I think, have we had so beautiful a spring; sunshine and showers

coming just as if they had been called for by the spirits of Hope, Love, and Beauty. This spot is at present a paradise, if you will admit the term when I acknowledge that yesterday afternoon the mountains were whitened with a fall of snow. But this only served to give the landscape, with all its verdure, blossoms, and leafy trees, a striking Swiss air, which reminded us of Unterselen and Interlacken.

Most reluctantly do I give up the hope of our seeing Italy together; but I am prepared to submit to what you think best. My own going with any part of my family must be deferred till John is nearer the conclusion of his University studies; so that for this summer it must not be thought of. I am truly sensible of your kind offer of assistance, and cannot be affronted at such testimonies of your esteem. We sacrifice our time, our ease, and often our health, for the sake of our friends (and what is friendship unless we are prepared to do so?). I will not then pay *money* such a compliment as to allow *it* to be too precious a thing to be added to the catalogue where fortunes are unequal, and where the occasion is mutually deemed important. But at present this must sleep.

You say nothing of painting. What was the fate of Mont Blanc? and what is the character of the present Annual Exhibitions? Leslie, I hear, has not advanced. John Bull is very bitter against poor Haydon, who, it is to be apprehended, is not making progress in the art.

I never had a higher relish for the beauties of Nature than during this spring, nor enjoyed myself more. What manifold reason, my dear Sir George, have you and I to be thankful to Providence! Theologians may puzzle their heads about dogmas as they will, the religion of gratitude cannot mislead us. Of that we are sure, and gratitude is the handmaid to hope, and hope the harbinger of faith. I look abroad upon Nature, I think of the best part of our Species, I lean upon my Friends, and I meditate upon the Scriptures, especially the Gospel of St. John, and my creed rises up of itself with the ease of an exhalation, yet a fabric of adamant.—God bless you, my ever dear friend. Kindest love to Lady B., W. WORDSWORTH.

SIR WALTER SCOTT to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Edinr., 17th June.[1]

My dear Sir George,—You are so much disposed to do kind and generous things that I daresay you are often unreasonably oppressed by intrusion, and now I come to add my stone, as the Highlanders say, to your *cairn* of troubles.

The bearer is a modest and unfriended young man, Scott by name and country, whose ambition has been excited by the praises he has received from friends, who were perhaps no great judges, until he conceived he had a decided vocation for the palette; and, with the view of prosecuting his studies as a painter, he goes to London to suffer penury, I suppose, and daub canvas, as many have done before him. I am interested on his account, from the difficulties of his situation, and the modesty and simplicity of his character; and, although I cannot pretend to judge of the degree, I think he certainly shows much aptness for the art. Perhaps you would be kind enough to give him a few words of

advice, which he will greatly need, and if you think his talents are worthy of cultivation, your influence may remove those difficulties which lie in the way of a young and inexperienced stranger. It will add to the many obligations I owe, and enable me still more to subscribe myself, with best respects to Lady Beaumont, dear Sir George, your grateful humble servant,

WALTER SCOTT.

I had a letter from Wordsworth and his sister the other day on an odd enough subject. When we went down to the country together in 1805, Miss Wordsworth thinks they went with me to wait on Miss Seward at Lichfield; Wordsworth contends they did not see her; and I, the referee, am unable to settle the point. Such is human evidence![2]

[1] The year is evidently 1825.—ED.

[2] There is an additional lapse of memory on Scott's part. It was not in 1805 that he visited Miss Seward at Lichfield, but in May 1807, when Miss Seward wrote to Cary, the translator of Dante: 'On Friday last, the positively great Walter Scott came "like a sunbeam to my dwelling."' (See Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, vol. iii. p. 13.) In the autumn of 1805 Scott and his wife visited Wordsworth at Dove Cottage, when they ascended Helvellyn together.—ED.

SIR WALTER SCOTT to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Abbotsford, 28th August.[1]

My dear Sir George, — I found your kind letter here yesterday, when I returned to my Lares after a long and most agreeable excursion, during which I saw the greater part of Ireland, which, despite all past and present feuds, is certainly one day destined to be the fairest portion of the Empire. I was happy to find it in a progressive state of improvement. They have got a very strict and efficient police, dressed and armed and disciplined like soldiers, and directed, not by the caprice of the local magistrates, who misused their official powers as much as Falstaff did the king's press, but by superintendents and inspectors, whose situations depend on their good conduct, and who are highly responsible for the least irregularity on the part of themselves or their subordinates. This system, like that of the *gens d'armerie* in France, which it strongly resembles, is certainly not comely to the eye in

a free country, but it is found to work well, and it is better that for a time the country should be under this restraint than subjected to the violence of careless threshers, and all the other gangs who stop mail-coaches, cut throats, and burn houses. Meantime, a sense of security is gradually giving confidence to capitalists, who are directing their attention to a soil and country which can so richly repay their outlay. The old cabins begin to disappear, the huge bogs are getting into cultivation, and the young people are ambitious of being better dressed than scarecrows. In them the spirit of improvement is fairly afloat, and will not, I venture to prophesy, be the less efficient that it proceeds, in Scottish phrase, *hooly and fairly.*

I was deeply grieved indeed to receive, from one so well qualified to judge, the very melancholy account of poor Wilkie. It is impossible for any man to have more admiration of his talents than I have, and yet even that was inferior to the regard inspired by the virtuous simplicity of his character. And must such a bowl be broken at the very fountain? He was with me two or three days last summer, making a sketch of me to be introduced into the Holyrood picture,

and I observed with regret he was in very low spirits, which I imputed to the illness of his mother. It is singular that poor Bird, who had considerable powers, should have broken down under a similar task—the parting, I think, of the King and Louis XVIII. I am convinced that mere men of the world have not the slightest conception of the tax paid by artists, poets, and musicians for the power of giving them pleasure.

> An anxious stomach well
> May be endured, so may the throbbing head;
> But such a dim delirium, such a dream
> Involves them, such a dastardly despair
> Unmans their soul, as maddening Pentheus felt
> When, baited round Cithæron's cruel sides,
> He saw two suns, and double Thebes appear.[2]

I hope in God ease and quiet will do much for Wilkie, and I am sure that as no man possesses more justly the general esteem and affection, the tone of his mind may be restored by the general sympathy of his friends. That he should have your friendship is most fortunate, since, if any one can encourage and strengthen his flagging spirits, it must be he who first encouraged his early efforts towards eminence. I returned by the Lakes, and saw both Southey and Wordsworth. I was sorry to see the former in rather

indifferent health. A poisonous insect had stung him in Holland, and though the wound was healed, he was in some apprehension of erysipelas. Wordsworth's eyes were troubling him a little, otherwise he was as well as he deserves to be—that is, as well as possible. We kept company for two days, during which time his conversation, as much distinguished by manly sense and candour as by talent and principle, was like a fountain in the desert. We did not omit to talk of Coleorton, and of the improvements which were meditated while I was there in 1806, and which I hope one day to see in their perfection. *Anch' io son' pittore*,[3] in the sense of plantations and buildings, for I have made a kind of *bravura* of a house here, a little fantastic, I own, but convenient, . . . well surrounded with infant woods. By the way, it is ungracious to complain of Nature for not bestowing more determined and marked beauty on Coleorton without doors, since she gave its lord the power of transferring to its interior all that art can copy from Nature. It would have been a prodigal excess of bounty to have given you more. I wish Lady Beaumont and you would come and see this place, such as it is. We could lodge

you comfortably, and the neighbourhood would amuse you for a few days. Many thanks for your kindness to Scott, for which the poor lad in a letter expresses himself duly grateful. I know nothing of his qualifications to become an artist, but think highly of him as a simple-minded, honourable, and patient youth.

Lady Scott joins in best respects to Lady Beaumont; and I am, dear sir, your much obliged and faithful WALTER SCOTT.

[1] No year is given. It was most probably 1825.—ED.
[2] Virgil, *Aeneid*, IV. 470.—ED.
[3] As Correggio said, when he first saw a picture painted by Raphael.—ED.

COLERIDGE to LADY BEAUMONT.

Saturday, 18th March 1826.

Dear Madam,—Though I am at present sadly below even *my* par of health, or rather unhealth, and am the more depressed thereby from the consciousness that in this yearly resurrection of Nature from her winter sleep, amid young leaves and blossoms and twittering nest-building birds, the sun so gladsome, the breezes with such healing on their wings, all good and lovely things are beneath me, above me, and everywhere around me, and all from God, while my incapability of enjoying, or, at best, languor in receiving them, is directly or indirectly from myself, from past procrastination, and cowardly impatience of pain —yet I am so far from *indisposed*, in relation to your ladyship's kind invital, that I can truly, and with an inward seriousness in the disguise of levity, assure you that Prince Hohenlohe's advertisement of the day and hour on which he proposed to commence his thaumaturgic operations never evinced a more rousing power, or

acted as a stronger 'soliciting spell' on his ultra-Catholic patients, than the imagination of a long evening passed in your society, with *both* Sir George Beaumont and Mr. J. H. Frere, exerts on *my* will and wish. For in the very heart of simple sincerity I can affirm, that when I think of Sir George the only person that (almost mechanically) becomes associated with his idea is Mr. J. H. Frere; and, *vice versa*, when my mind dwells on Mr. Frere (and O how many many reasons I have to think of him with esteem, admiration, and grateful love!), I naturally recur to Coleorton and Grosvenor Square. In fact, it comes as natural to me, and is so habitual, that whenever I have been talking of the one, my house- and hearth-mates regularly expect the name of the other. They are not my own words, or of my suggestion, but Mrs. Gillman's—that they (Sir G. and Mr. F.) seem intended to show us what, and how much, is comprised in the phrase 'a perfect gentleman'—but (let me add this necessary comment) as Edmund Spenser sang, and Sidney realised the idea.

Nothing short of moral or physical impracticability will prevent me from availing myself of your ladyship's invitation for Friday the 24th.

Actual feebleness has kept me still a debtor to the clergyman at Coleorton, but I intend to answer him by Monday's post. In Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living* I have met a passage completely coinciding with, and so far sanctioning the view of Infant Baptism, in the *Aids to Reflection*, viz., that the assertion of regeneration in the Baptismal Service is symbolical and prospective, and instructs the members of the Church to *feel* and *act* toward the babe by anticipation of a lively and assured hope AS IF it were already a Christian by individual faith and election.

My dear old friend Charles Lamb and I differ widely (and in point of taste and moral feeling this is a rare occurrence) in our estimation and liking of George Herbert's sacred poems. He greatly prefers Quarles, nay, he *dis*likes Herbert. But if Herbert had only written the two following stanzas—and there are a hundred other that in one mood or other of my mind have impressed me—I should be grateful for the possession of his works. The stanzas are especially affecting to me; because the folly of overvaluing myself in any reference to my future lot is *not* the sin or danger that besets me, but a tendency to self-contempt, a sense of the utter disproportionate-

ness of all I can call *me*, to the promises of the Gospel—*this* is *my* sorest temptation: the promises, I say, not to the *threats*. For in order to the fulfilment of these, it needs only that I should be left to myself to sink into the chaos and lawless productivity of my own still perishing yet imperishable nature.

(*Signature, etc., cut away.*)

SOUTHEY to LADY BEAUMONT.

Kesnick, 29th July 1826.

My dear Madam,—I thank you for your kind consolatory letter. Little indeed when I saw you last in London did I anticipate the affliction which awaited me on my return. It has shaken us all severely, and I know not when the house will recover that cheerfulness which used to be its abiding blessing. But God's will be done! We know not what is best for ourselves; this only we know, that blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, and that in a better world we shall be reunited to those whom we have lost. This feeling has long been habitual with me, and I have rather to fix my mind upon the business and the duties of this world than to dwell upon the hopes of the next, which make them appear weary and unprofitable.

To those duties, however, I must apply myself, glad to feel in the sober sadness of declining life that all afflictions are softened down by time, as well as recompensed in eternity.

I hope Sir George holds his intention of visiting the north this year, and that the unusual beauty of the season may induce you to accompany him. Present my respects to him, and believe me, dear Lady Beaumont, yours with sincere regard,

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

SOUTHEY to LADY BEAUMONT.

Keswick, 18th Feby. 1827.

My dear Lady Beaumont,—I have hesitated whether to write to you upon the awful occasion, being unwilling either to appear obtrusive or insensible. My nature leads me, when I am in affliction, to keep silence, and never give utterance to the thoughts which are always in my heart; there they remain, like something which should be secret as well as sacred. Perhaps there may be some moral cowardice in this (though I think not so), perhaps too it may be unwise, as preserving longer the edge of grief; but it is with me an instinct, and too frequent occasion has made it one of the habits of my mind. Some pain is spared by this to others. I would gladly have those who are about me participate in my enjoyments; but sorrows, if it were possible, should always be reserved to myself. This temper would make me fearful of writing to you, lest your feelings should be in

unison with it, and I should disturb them by making any call upon your attention. And perhaps I might have continued silent had it not been that you have thought and spoken of me, and have read the Memoir of Dr. Sayers under circumstances which will give it a peculiar, though melancholy, interest to me from henceforth. I am under some literary obligations to Dr. Sayers, which are acknowledged there, as far as the opportunity would admit. I was also personally acquainted with him, and wrote with a feeling of personal regard and regret. But I knew Sir George better, and have lost in him far more.

You have the comfort of reflecting that few men have been so singularly favoured, and that during a long life. His station was the happiest in which he could have been placed, because his moral and intellectual endowments prevented affluence from becoming to him the snare which it so frequently proves. He has been favoured with a rare exemption from the uncertainties and anxieties of youth, the cares and sorrows of manhood and middle life, the afflictions and infirmities of age,—even from natural decay; so that when the hour came, it found him with his faculties

and capacities of enjoyment unimpaired. And this latter circumstance, though it makes the summons for departure appear, in a certain sense, to have been premature as well as sudden, is nevertheless matter for special thankfulness, and such I am sure you feel it to be. It is something to have lived to himself, and followed his own genius, instead of being distracted with the business and vexations of public life. It is something to have conferred honour by one of the arts, upon an old and honourable name, which had long been illustrious in another. It is something to have left durable memorials of himself, and a noble example. But the crowning blessing is to have lived well, and *in faith.* Ought I to have added *in fear* also? I think not. The fear of the Lord is the *beginning* of wisdom; but when we have attained to the love of God, that love, if I am not deceived, casteth out fear. I cannot fear when I consider that He has commanded us to call Him our Father. In every action of our blessed Saviour's life I find nothing but mercy and tenderness, and His discourses are to the same tenor. There is nothing there to perplex, still less to discourage or dismay us. He requires our belief and our love, and then everything is promised and

assured to us. Our best divines appear to me sometimes to err in not representing Christianity as the amiable religion which it truly is,—the dispensation of love. They address themselves to our fears, when our hopes and desires and aspirations might be appealed to with better effect. I think I have observed that broken spirits are terrified by this, and bold ones hardened. If I were a preacher, redeeming love should be my most frequent theme. I would endeavour to win the heart by softening it, to make my flock *feel* what religion is; when that is felt, death is disarmed of its sting, and the grave has no terrors.

In this feeling, which you have not now to acquire, you have your only, but all-sufficient consolation. I wish your place of abode were at this time not so recluse, that the pain of meeting those persons with whom it must be a freshening of grief to meet, might have been gone through at first. For in all cases it is best to do with the least delay that which is painful, but must be done. And I think the presence of your friends would be most salutary, when your spirit fails,—as it too surely will,—after its exertions of fortitude. Afflictions of this nature come upon us with a shock, as if they crushed us; there is an effort to

resist this, but after that effort the weight is felt, with a pressing and continued sense of its presence. God bless and support you, my dear Lady Beaumont—a prayer in which my household earnestly join. I need not say how much you are in their thoughts.—Believe me, always, yours with sincere regard,

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

SOUTHEY to LADY BEAUMONT.

Keswick, 3d March 1827.

My dear Lady Beaumont,—Your letter has surprised as well as gratified me, for it is gratifying to know that we have lived in the thoughts of a friend at times when we were little conscious of it. And yet I believe we have all of us a wider existence of this kind than we commonly apprehend; for if I look into what passes in my own mind, when thoughts and fancies come there as they list, I perceive that scarcely a day passes in which I do not think of every person for whom I have any feeling which deserves to be called friendship. Old recollections rise we know not how, and intimacies are thus preserved in their freshness, however long the time and wide the interval which separate us from their object.

It happened to me once to meet a friend after a longer separation than is usual in this life. We were fellow-collegians, and had lived at College in that sort of intimacy which can hardly take place anywhere else, or at any other time

of life. We regularly breakfasted together, did some of our studies together, walked together, went on the water together, and always met in the evening, unless there was some special engagement to the contrary. We left Oxford at the same time, in the summer of 1794, and never saw each other from that hour, till he came from Devonshire to visit me here, after an interval of eight-and-twenty years. It was by much the longest journey he had ever undertaken, and I believe nothing but the desire of seeing me and my family could have drawn him so far from home. The first feeling was a strong and somewhat painful perception of the changes which time had wrought; but it soon became a pleasure to recognise how much was left—looks, tones, gestures, cherished recollections, and, above all, feelings over which time and change have no power, which are pledges of our immortality, and which, it is to be believed, we shall carry with us into eternity.

This was a pleasure as high in degree as it is rare in kind. But how much of this, and in an infinitely higher degree, awaits us when we shall have put off mortality! I have at this time more ties in the next world than in this; and,

were it not for the duties which are to be performed here, toward those who are committed to my charge (and by whom I could ill be spared, humanly speaking), there is nothing which I should contemplate with so much complacency regarding myself, as the shortness and the uncertainty of human life, as the thought that I *must soon*, and *may presently*, be with those who are gone before me. This I have learnt, that whatever may be the term of life assigned to us or ours, there is cause for acquiescing in the will of Providence. They who are summoned early exchange this state of existence for a happier, and escape the troubles which are our inheritance here. They whose removal is deferred till they are full of days take with them, if they have numbered their days well, all that earth can give, and obtain before their departure a serene anticipation of which youth knows nothing, and which is hardly attainable in middle life. We speak of age as of a second childhood in reference only to the helplessness and imbecility with which, in cases of prolonged decay, it is attended. But there is another and more natural point of resemblance between these stages of our earthly existence which it is consolatory to con-

template. We become as little children, in the state of sure and quiescent dependence, which we then—and hardly till then—learn to place in our Creator and Preserver. The course of nature falls in with our reason and our duty. We trust in our Heavenly Father, as a child relies upon the protection and love of its parents; and in that trust, when the night comes, we lie down contentedly. Pain and sorrow bring us to the same state of mind by a shorter way: while we are on the way the difference is great indeed, but when we have reached the end, it is of infinitely little importance how we were brought thither. There will be an overpayment for all suffering, and we shall see, when we look back upon the ways of Providence, that we were conducted in the way that was best.

All here desire their kindest remembrances. Mrs. Coleridge desires me also to say that she has heard from the Bishop of London, and to say something for her, which I know not how to say. We are expecting Edith home to-day, and Miss Hutchinson with her, unless this wintry weather (which is very likely) should delay them. God bless and support you, dear Lady Beaumont. —Yours with sincere regard,

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

SOUTHEY to LADY BEAUMONT.

Keswick, 18th Feby. 1828.

My dear Lady Beaumont,—A letter from my brother in Harley Street makes it proper that I should acknowledge the hundred pounds he has received for me from your hands; and this I do with a grateful and gratifying sense of obligation to the living as well as to the departed.

I shall soon hear of you from Wordsworth, who is coming to us as soon as John sets off for his ordination journey—one of the most serious, methinks, that man can be called upon to undertake. I should hope to see you also in the early summer, but you will not be willing to pass the pleasantest season of the year in London, and my movements must be regulated by the periodical return of an annual malady, the force of which has been so weakened by a regular course of travelling at the time of its access, that I am not without hope of overcoming it entirely. Therefore, as I shall not be in London before

the end of May, there is not much chance, I am afraid, of finding you there. My stay will be very short, about a fortnight, after which I shall go for two or three days to Miss Bowles, in Hampshire, and from thence make my way to the west of England, where Edith will probably tarry till then, for the sake of returning home under my care. But I never look so far before me without bearing in mind the uncertainty of human life, which I have so severely been made to feel.

At present, thank God, my family are in tolerable health. They were all benefited by Harrogate last year, and I have felt stronger myself during the present winter than for several years before.

The late political changes have given me some pleasure—I cannot quite say *satisfaction*—on public grounds, and some regret on private ones. I am sorry that Mr. Wynn has been displaced, and sorry too that his removal, which could not on any political ground be necessary, was brought about in a manner the most needlessly offensive, —with a want of courtesy, of respect, and of feeling, which could only have proceeded from hard natures. He falls back exactly to the same

course which he pursued before he was in office, of complete independence of any party, and he will not be driven by any personal hostility or neglect from supporting the system in which he had for some years co-operated. This I know from himself. From other quarters I hear that Lord Grenville has remonstrated upon his removal, and that this is likely to be one of the last acts of Lord Grenville's life.

Last year I had opportunities for learning much concerning the religious movement in Ireland, and from all accounts I cannot but conclude that it is very serious in itself, and likely to be so in its consequences. All the Irish with whom I conversed (they were many, and of very different opinions) agreed in thinking that there was no danger of a rebellion in that country, except one person—a very right-principled, sober-minded, clear-headed man (brother of Baron Pennefather). He thought that the incendiaries would never rest till they had set that kingdom in flames, and that the religious struggle would tend to accelerate the crisis. While the political question alone was agitated, the priests had nothing to lose, nor was it by any means clear that the great body of them had anything to gain. But

when the spirit of religious inquiry makes its way among their bedarkened people, and the Bible is put into their hands, and those people begin to question their absolute authority, and to ask upon what Divine commission it is founded, then the craft is in danger, and they are likely to prefer arms to argument. This was his opinion, and this, I confess, is mine.

. . . The proprietor of *The Keepsake* has sold fifteen thousand copies this year, and for binding the next volume he has bespoken four thousand yards of red watered silk at three shillings a yard,—a good fact, both as relating to manufactures and literature! My friend Henry Taylor observes upon it, that trash covered with tinsel is the article for our market. If the nine Muses were in England at this time they could not get an honest livelihood by any other means than by raising mushrooms.—With kindest regards from Mrs. S., her sisters, and the youngers of the family, believe me, dear Lady Beaumont, yours, with sincere regard,

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

WORDSWORTH[1] to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Rydal Mount, Sunday, July 19th, 1829.

My dear Sir George,—Last night Mr. Drummond arrived, and brought your very kind letter. The mournful event[2] which occasioned it, I was instantly informed of by the care—for which I was truly thankful—of Mr. Knight, and Mr. Merewether.

The shock was very painful; and would have been still more so, had we received it first through the public papers.

It is seven-and-twenty years since I first became acquainted with the lamented pair whom we have lost. We soon became united in affectionate intercourse, which has known no abatement, but our friendship rather strengthened with time, and will survive in my heart till it ceases to beat. In the recently deceased we have lost one of the most disinterested and pure-minded of human beings. Abundant proofs have I had, my dear Sir George, how strongly attached she

was to you, and from the depths of my heart I condole with you and Lady Beaumont in this bereavement; but she was ripe for the change, blessed be God! and I trust is, or is destined to be, a glorified spirit.

We were sorry to learn from Mr. Drummond that your own health had suffered under this trial. I should be glad to hear that nothing of the kind recurred from what you have yet to go through at Coleorton. The funeral will be to-morrow; may you be supported through it! Mr. Drummond tells me that Mr. Merewether has in his possession a paper, dated so far back as 1816, signifying the wish of the departed upon this and some other points, which puts me upon naming that when Lady Beaumont conducted Mrs. Wordsworth and myself to the monument of Sir George, she said, 'You observe there is just room for my name below'; but whether she meant on the same tablet neither of us could venture to ask; but you may have more recent instructions.

We are most anxious to hear how my poor sister bears these afflicting tidings. She is at Halifax, in Yorkshire, where she was left by my son recovering from the effects of her late

dangerous illness. Thankful at all events will she be that her dear friend's time of suffering was so short, and that she passed several days with her and Mrs. Willes so lately.

Along with my condolence, in which Mrs. W. and my daughter join, to Lady Beaumont present my sincere regards, and believe me, my dear Sir George, faithfully your much obliged

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

[1] In his daughter's handwriting.—ED.

[2] The death of his mother, the Dowager Lady Beaumont, wife of Sir George the artist.—ED.

WORDSWORTH to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Whitehaven Castle, Oct. 19th.

My dear Sir George,—I have this moment received your obliging letter, forwarded to me from Rydal Mount, whither I hoped to have returned before this time. Unexpected delays have arisen, and I now fear that we shall scarcely be able to start in time for reaching Coleorton till the first week in November. But, not to shackle Lady Beaumont and you in the least, we will let you know the day of our departure when it is fixed; and pray do not scruple to let us know if this unavoidable delay has rendered it inconvenient for you to receive us.

In fact we have been obliged to take another house for the new-married pair, the one which my son had hired, and which we had half furnished, being pronounced by the medical attendant of the Curwen family much too cold for her health; which is too probable, as it is no less than 500 feet above the level of the sea, to

which it is completely exposed, and indeed to all winds.

I long to see your little boy, and believe me, dear Sir George, with kindest remembrances to Lady Beaumont, faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

WORDSWORTH to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

My dear Sir George,—The papers inform me that a second son has made his appearance at Coleorton Hall. We all congratulate you and Lady Beaumont sincerely upon this happy event. May the newly-arrived and his brother live to be a blessing to their parents!

I congratulate you also upon having got through your troublesome office of Sheriff, as it is so much more agreeable to look back upon such an employment, however honourable, than to have it in prospect.

My dear sister, though obliged to keep to the habits and restraints of an invalid for prudence sake, is, I am happy to say, in good health. She and Mrs. Wordsworth join with me in best wishes and regards to yourself and Lady Beaumont, as would my son and daughter have done, but they are now together at his abode, I cannot say his parsonage (for the living has none), at Moresby, near Whitehaven.—I remain, my dear Sir George, faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

April 15th, Rydal Mount,
Kendal.

WORDSWORTH to LADY BEAUMONT.[1]

My dear Lady Beaumont,—You will excuse my employing Mrs. W.'s pen to express my regret that the health, neither of Sir George nor yourself, is fitted to bear the climate of Coleorton during the winter season. Sincerely do I wish the air of Leamington may agree better with you.

* * * * *

Believe me, dear Lady B., my wish is very strong to see your rising family, and especially if I could have that pleasure in my old haunts at Coleorton. Our thoughts in this house turn very much upon the impending fate of the Church, and also, as is natural, they are directed often to your father,[2] whose high office had never more anxious duties attached to it since the overthrow of the Church in Charles the First's time.

Were you ever told that my son is building a parsonage-house upon a small living, to which he was lately presented by the Earl of Lonsdale?

The situation is beautiful, commanding the windings of the Derwent both above and below the site of the house; the mountain Skiddaw terminating the view one way, at a distance of six miles, and the ruins of Cockermouth Castle appearing nearly in the centre of the same view. In consequence of some discouraging thoughts expressed by my son when he had entered upon this undertaking, I addressed to him the following Sonnet, which you may perhaps read with some interest at the present crisis.

Pray accept Mrs. Wordsworth's affectionate remembrance (and in her own name, let her add her apologies for such an ill-penned note) to yourself and Sir George, and at the Rectory our united regards, and believe me, my dear Lady B., to be, faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

[Then follows the Sonnet—

'Pastor and Patriot, at whose bidding rise,' etc.]

[1] No date, but evidently written in the year 1833.—ED.

[2] Lady Beaumont was a daughter of Dr. William Howley, Archbishop of Canterbury.—ED.

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH to LADY BEAUMONT.

Monday, January 13th.[1]

My dear Lady Beaumont,—I will not tire you with explanations of the causes of my long silence, and still less would I burthen you with excuse and apology; but in justice to Rydal Mount I must take upon myself the blame of the long silence kept up by the whole household, for it belongs to me alone; but so far from its being a proof that I was indifferent to the kindness expressed in your letter, it was the fulness of my gratitude which impelled me to assure my sister that I would myself write when she offered, as she has too often been obliged to do, to write for me. I did however then think (as I have double reasons now for thinking) that you would be no gainer by my choice; yet it was not an unpleasing fancy to me to believe that the pleasure of seeing my handwriting (as a proof of increased strength and better health) might more than compensate for your loss. You may believe that during the long time passed since you so kindly wrote to me,

there have been many days in which, as an invalid, I have not been able to use my pen; but latterly I have delayed writing in hopes I should be able to tell you that my niece was really soon to have the satisfaction of meeting with you at Leamington. Nothing, however, could be fixed till after Miss Southey's marriage; an event which, as to time, remained all uncertain till the Archbishop,[2] your venerable father, in his goodness, thought fit to present Mr. Warter, the intended husband, to a living which will enable them to live in all the comfort they could wish for. The pair are to be married on Wednesday, and Dora is gone to Keswick to act as bride's-maid to this, the last of her unmarried friends of an age agreeing with her own. Of course Dora is happy in anticipation of her friend's happiness; but she so dreads the loss of her, and knows so well what a chasm will be left in her parents' house, that she would have gone off with a sad heart under any circumstances; but at present the weight is twofold. To spend a few 'last days' with Edith Southey she was obliged abruptly to part from her eldest brother and her cousin Christopher, who had both come unlooked for to see us, and the former is already gone, and

the cousin must depart to-morrow to prepare for a commencement of College duties as Greek Lecturer of *Undergraduates* (I add the last words to explain, not knowing exactly the title of his office). Mr. and Mrs. Merewether (Chris. W. has not the happiness of being personally acquainted with *you*) will be sorry to hear that we think he has drawn too largely upon his strength during a nine months' residence in Greece, and long pedestrian travels in Switzerland. He is thin and pale, and his lively spirits are often oppressed by the scholar's malady, headaches, attended, as I think, by something of bilious disorder. He is, however, so much better than, as it seems, he was some weeks ago, that I hope nothing is wanted but a little more time for perfect restoration.

Wednesday, January 15th.

I began my letter upon too large a scale, by which, my dear Lady Beaumont, you are no gainer, for in this case, as in most others, the longer the letter the more tiresome or dull. This, however, I trust you will kindly excuse, and this is not my reason for making this complaint against myself. It is, that I happened to be a

little unwell, and therefore I was obliged to put aside my paper, and have been unable to go on from various causes until this day—the very day of the wedding. My brother and sister are preparing to go down the Rydal Mount Hill to the turnpike road, where they will pace backward and forward to shake hands with and give their blessing to the bride and bridegroom on their way southward. Though the air is as mild as in the month of May, and the sun, after many days of gloom and darkness, shines sweetly upon them, and though there is every cause for thankfulness and hope, I fear neither sunshine nor genial breezes will dispel the sadness of Greta Hall; yet Mr. Southey himself, who will perhaps most constantly and most deeply feel the loss, will, I am sure, make such efforts to hide or to stifle his feelings, that the saddest heart among them cannot but be cheered. Mr. Warter is much beloved by the whole family into which he has entered, and *we* have formed a very favourable opinion of him. He and Miss Southey, and her sister and brother, spent a few days with us as soon as my brother's eyes would allow him to enjoy *any* company. For a very long time his wife and daughter were in constant watchful attend-

ance—either reading to or writing for him,—and I was beginning to hope that Dora might summon the resolution to go to Leamington after the marriage, but this she now declares she cannot do, she should be so very wretched at a distance from her father, till his eyesight is more strengthened and secure; so we must now look forward to the time when the two may venture on their travels together, which I hope, whenever it is, may take them within reach of you. My sister cannot make a third, as, Miss Hutchinson not being at Rydal, she could not leave me. I somewhat boldly did once hope that *I* might next spring be able to visit Cambridge and Coleorton, but I now feel that home is likely to be the place for me—and no hardship! for my prison (if we may so call it) is one of the prettiest and most cheerful in England, including what is to be seen from the windows; and I have no bodily oppression but from weakness, with occasional fits of uneasy pain that is not violent. I was grateful to you for all your communications, domestic and parish, for as long as I live I must retain affectionate and tender recollections of Whitwick and Coleorton, and shall be thankful if the day ever comes when I again set foot in the

Hall and the two parsonage-houses; and need I add that it would delight me to see your little boys playing on the lawn? How distinctly do I recollect the nursery, and you, with your baby on your knee, and the delighted *grandmother*, I began to write (and let it stand), looking on.

Great and melancholy the changes since that day—and your own families have been severely tried,—yet happy are you in having such a comforter and such support at the head of them. I do not speak of public anxieties and public cares—the subject is too weighty and too perplexing for my poor mind; and I hope that the Archbishop's lessons are not so thrown away upon me as that I am not enabled to trust with calmness that God's good providence will order all things for the best. It is time that I should lay down the pen, for again I am getting into my old fault—seeking brevity, and never finding it. You must forgive me, for it is in confidence of your friendship that I go on. My brother promises to add a few words, therefore I conclude with begging you to present my respectful and affectionate regards to Sir George, with sincerest wishes that the next year may be a happy one—not like the last, a year of much sorrow and care.

Pray remember me affectionately, and with best wishes, to the Merewethers, and believe me ever, my dear Lady Beaumont, your affectionate and much obliged friend,

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH.

You will excuse my irregular handwriting, and my many blots and erasures, especially when told that I always write with the paper outspread on my knee.

Thursday Morning.

Mr. Merewether will be interested in knowing that my nephew John was summoned from us, by the death of his wife's valuable uncle, Mr. Stanley, Rector of Workington, a great loss to the whole family, and it has been a heavy affliction to John and his wife. Mrs. J. W. Warter left us marriage tokens at the foot of the hill, but was so much affected as to be unable to speak to the person who took them in charge. We have not heard that you are actually gone to Leamington, but I conclude you are there; yet the winter has been warm enough even for Coleorton. I hope you are stronger.

[1] 1834 evidently.—ED.
[2] Archbishop Howley.—ED.

WORDSWORTH to SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Dear Sir George,—The letter with which I now trouble you will not seem to require an apology when I have mentioned the circumstance which occasions it.

In the private sitting-room of my deceased friend Lady Beaumont a small picture was hung, painted by Sir George, which he presented to me, and which, at Lady Beaumont's request, I gave up to her for her lifetime. The subject is a scene in Switzerland, and on the back of it will be found a memorandum in Lady Beaumont's handwriting certifying, if I am not mistaken, to whom it belongs. Sir George in his kindness intended to paint for me a companion to this little piece, as characteristic of Italy as this is of Switzerland, but the intention was not fulfilled. Having mentioned these particulars, I need scarcely add that I should be obliged by your forwarding this memorial of Sir George's friendship for me to Rydal at your convenience.

My sister is much better in health, though still

obliged to manage herself as an invalid. She and Mrs. W. unite with me in kind remembrances to yourself and Lady Beaumont, and believe me, dear Sir George, faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

27th Novr., Rydal Mount,
Kendal.

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